

**MORE THAN A CAPABLE MARINER:  
MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF COMMAND AT SEA—  
VIEWS FROM THE BRIDGE**

by

David K. Brown

CALVIN LATHAN, EdD, Faculty Mentor and Chair

JAY AVELLA, PhD, Committee Member

BERNARD ULOZAS, DA, Committee Member

William A. Reed, PhD, Dean, School of Business and Technology

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## **Abstract**

Command at sea is the ultimate career goal for all naval officers. However, an alarming number of officers assigned to command various units of the United States Navy have failed to complete their command tours successfully. This qualitative study presents the views of a sixteen former ship commanding officers on meeting the challenges of Command in the first decade of the 21st century. Commanding officers identified challenges that reflected the pressures from shifting social, professional, and technological developments. Analysis of their reported experiences validated long-standing traditions and practices of those who have commanded at sea and generated deeper understanding for appreciating the path and preparation for command.

Commanding officers make significant differences in their ships' readiness and performance. The Surface Warfare Officers path to command works. Navy leaders develop future Navy leaders, and future successful commanding officers served under successful commanding officers. The study offers insights on future inquiries to understand the concept and nature of Command and to discover how to appreciate the qualities, experiences, practices, and commitment necessary to Command well. The study identified areas to continue to explore in taming the information explosion.

Ignoring systemic consequences and mission requirements, budget pressured, Flag-level decisions caused much turmoil in the Surface Force by reducing manning, maintenance, and training. Many of the informants who were Junior Officers at the time tried to warn the bosses of the projected results of those choices. Failure to listen to deckplate advice set up a crisis in credibility. Current practices tending toward micromanaging ships and their commanding officers are further eroding it. Yet, hope remains. Recent decisions

have put factors in place to reverse negative funding, training, and manning trends for ships. The study provides seasoned advice targeted for the three levels of those progressing toward future Command of ships at sea. A focus on taking care of people, helping them excel by challenging them to greater achievements, and exhibiting a detailed sense of purpose to meet standards, as well as timing and favor, combined to make these Commanding Officers “More than Capable Mariners.”

Key words: Command at sea, efficacy, forehandedness, leadership, professional, qualitative, service, trust

## **Dedication**

To the Commanding Officers of Navy ships past, present, and future, and those unknown, unheralded, yet never to be forgotten, Sailors with whom I had the pleasure to serve.

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## **CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION**

Command at sea is the ultimate career goal for all naval officers. However, an alarming number of officers assigned to command various units of the United States Navy have failed to complete their command tours successfully. Captain Harley Cope wrote in his introduction to the classic *Command at Sea*, the premier book for naval officers, that every young officer who is worth his salt looked forward eagerly to his first command (Cope, 1943). Command at sea represents attainment of a position of special trust and confidence in which a naval officer takes full responsibility for the safety, well-being, and efficiency of a U.S. Navy ship and its assigned people or “officers and crew” in executing its mission. Successful command demands a combination of leadership and management and entrepreneurial skills, and some say, luck, timing, and always, heart. Every generation taking command faces a similar challenge of integrating and aligning the efforts of the assigned crew to meet mission requirements.

### **Introduction to the Problem**

In the past three years, the U.S. Navy had to replace twelve commanders of surface combatant ships due to loss of trust and confidence in their ability to command. Those commanders succumbed to the challenge of command. This dissertation explored how recent commanding officers of Navy ships described how they were prepared to face the challenges of command, how they met the expectations, and how they assessed they were successful in command.

Historically, Naval tradition has credited John Paul Jones with proclaiming the qualities of a naval officer that include that an officer of the Navy should be “more than a capable mariner” (Bogle & Holwitt, 2004, p. 18).

Officers must possess a wide-ranging education, enact refined manners, display conscientious courtesy, and maintain the nicest sense of personal honor. An officer must be tactful, patient, just, firm, and charitable. Every act of a subordinate worthy of praise should be noticed and rewarded, even if the reward is only a word of approval. Likewise, officers should not ignore a single fault in any subordinate, but be able to distinguish error from malice, thoughtlessness from incompetency, and well-meant shortcoming from heedless or stupid blunder. (Bogle & Holwitt, 2004, p. 18)

A full soliloquy based on these thoughts has been required memorization and instantly professed by every member of the incoming class of midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy since the early 1900s. However, research has proven that these words were not directly from Jones; nevertheless, officers agree the speech correctly expresses the sentiment for the requirements of a naval officer (Bogle & Holwitt, 2004; Naval History and Heritage Command, 2008).

Many of the challenges faced by ship COs have not changed during the eras or generations that ships have gone to sea. Yet, the Navy, as a microcosm of the society that produces it, has changed. Programs, directives, and expectations have evolved to mirror societal concerns and have altered the challenges faced by those in command (Trongale, 2001; Stavridis & Girrier, 2010). Both men and women now serve at all levels in the organization. Almost all opportunities are equally available for those who qualify to serve. The recent opening of submarine service to women solidified the meritocracy. The speed and pace of change around these issues also augmented the challenges of command.

Naval officers with command experience may view these challenges differently and articulate various factors that influenced their assessment of “successful” command. This study worked to determine the ways previous COs described their challenges and sought to learn how these factors that constitute “successful” command at sea may have changed in the 21st century. Further investigation of these indicators may assist the preparation of officers for future command and identify qualities of officers who possess great risk for successfully completing their command tours.

### **Background of the Study**

Every generation of naval officers has met the challenge of command at sea since Navies became important symbols and guarantors of national power. Famous sea going commanders have existed in lore, literature, and life. Nelson’s exploits centered the measure of a master and commander at sea and offered the stage for the novels of Patrick O’Brien. The American Navy produced warfighting heroes from the sea such as John Paul Jones in the first years of the nation, Stephan Decatur in the early 1800s, David Glasgow Farragut in the Civil War, Dewey at the turn of the century, and the famous Halsey, Burke, and Nimitz from World War II.

Not everyone who joins the Navy does aspire to command. But, for those who did achieve command at sea, a common set of factors may exist that allowed them to succeed or, conversely, caused them to succumb to the pressures of command. Compton (2008) identified three key areas necessary for the development of leaders of high reliability organizations (HROs). Experiences and assignments, coaching and mentoring, and training, education, and readings contributed to developing successful HRO leaders.

During their trek to command, naval officers pass through all those paths. Yet, some still fail. No study identifying the shifting expectations and challenges faced by Navy ship captains over the years existed in the literature and none reviewed how these challenges reflected the pressures from shifting social, professional, and technological developments.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the past three years, the Navy has removed a number of COs from their commands due to loss of confidence based on incidents ranging from poor command climates to public intoxication to inability to command. Hayes (2008) declared the presence of a crisis of leadership in the Navy. However, as of May 2011, naval officers held five of the ten four star Joint command positions in spite of the lack of a Navy-wide formal leadership development process. Additionally, since the Defense Reorganization Act of 1947, Navy Admirals have held a significant number of the four-star leadership positions in the Joint environment. Moreover, each generation has produced officers who were successful commanders at sea, which set the stage for their continued progression to joint leadership and command at the highest level.

Instead of lining up with current Admiral-level professed worries at the lack of focus at the operational level, Hayes (2008) leveled the charge that the real leadership crisis resided at the tactical level: those in Command at sea. In early 2010, Admirals Harvey and Walsh, Commanders of the two major operational fleet commands, assigned retired Admiral Phil Balisle to lead a board designed to investigate the demise of surface

ship readiness and maintenance practices. Much of the focus of the blame rested on ships' COs.

In a recent Blog post, Admiral John C. Harvey, Jr., Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command (USFF), noted that most of the commanding officers (COs) detached for cause during his time at USFF, were for personal misconduct. The specifics may have differed whether through personal misconduct, negligence, or exceptionally poor judgment, but each commanding officer, lost the trust of their subordinates or confidence of their superiors and without that fundamental building block in place—trust—they no longer had the ability to command (Harvey, 2011). He continued with specific guidance to those who would become COs to understand the following significant lessons from these incidents covering *loyalty* to the Institution, the significance of the Command Leadership Team, and the difference between *risk taking* and “fatal flaws.” He evoked shared convictions of the long line of former COs when he enjoined that Command at sea was still the best job in the Navy and the highlight of any Naval career (Harvey, 2011).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative inquiry was to discover individual commanding officer's perceptions of challenges they faced while in Command of a U.S. Navy cruiser-destroyer type ship in the 21st century. The study also sought to ascertain how different commanders were prepared to adapt to the historical, generational, and professional demands experienced during their command tours. Additionally, the exploration attempted to identify indicators for success in meeting the challenges in command at sea.

## **Rationale and Justification**

The Navy is having a problem with highly visible officers being relieved of command for various misdeeds. Some have suggested these problems are due to the changing times. Budget pressures, changing missions, and the changing nature of the workforce may have also added to the challenges. A combination of generational differences and the challenges of mastering technology and innovations could also be among the causes. Moreover, social experimentation may also be part of the mix. No one had articulated and associated the effects of compounding factors of technology, communications, and expectations and effects of generational development with the challenges of command of Navy ships. No study had looked at the developing challenges across generations of commanding officers. Moreover, the Navy had no systematic program for ensuring no ship COs will be relieved for “cause.”

The study attempted to discern what has changed, what must change, and what may never change in the challenge of command at sea in the 21st century. The potential benefits of this study can serve to improve the preparation and selection processes of officers for assignment to command at sea. The results helped to uncover how the best commanders employed insights from a variety of leadership postures and enhanced awareness of their paradigms of factors constituting success. It also uncovered early warning signs for those who have high potential to fail in command. This study generated ideas to improve the manner in which next generation of officers can be prepared to face their own challenges in command.

## **Research Questions**

How did former U. S. Navy cruiser-destroyer force commanding officers of the 21st century describe how they met the challenges of command at sea?

- What challenges did COs anticipate they would face in their tours in command at sea and what prepared COs to address these challenges?
- What new challenges occurred and how did the preparation help COs meet the new challenges?
- What factors did COs use to judge their success in command?
- What advice would COs offer for those desiring to command at sea?

## **Significance of the Study**

There has never been a more pressing time to study the changing demands of command at sea. Command failures cause much damage to the Navy as a whole, not just to the ships affected. Not only do these incidents weigh on those the commanders leave behind; these episodes hit at the very foundation of the honor, courage, and commitment the Navy and the nation expect from all who serve. Chatfield (2009) covered the path to restore confidence by interim COs, those who take over for Command failures. Based on the timing, this study may uncover some paths out of the crisis of Command failures by pointing to potential improvements in the preparation, grooming, and selection processes.

The future of command at sea portends to be even more challenging. Navy ship populations normally consist of mixed generations: ship's crews have 70% under 25 years old, and less than 10% over 40 in age. No study has laid out the expectations and leadership styles demanded from ships' commanding officers based on the changing

nature of their workforce and advances in technologies. Understanding the impact of generations on succession planning is vital for long-term health of Navy. Moreover, all services and DOD must produce and sustain a line of leaders to maintain the special trust and confidence demanded for our national security. Many professional magazines feature articles on the challenges of command, and, with the rise of the blogosphere, those who possess partial information, but large opinions, hotly debate alarming command incidents and changing Navy policies. Few evidenced-based studies of command exist since most of the authors have provided their own estimate of the situation based on their narrowed points of view. This study accumulated various points of view to seek common understanding of the challenges to COs from which to develop paths to improve the preparation and selection of officers destined for command of ships at sea. Since the Navy's trend is toward more, rather than fewer, failures, the absence of an investigation may cause the Navy to remain bewildered or worse as it attempts to stem the rash of command failures. This study added to the growing body of evidence to improve commanders' performance and emotional stability in their roles as ship's captains. This study affirmed the conduct and credibility demanded from professionals of organizations in national security and public service. Perhaps leaders of other high performance organizations can recognize the parallels and patterns of challenges and employ the findings across the range of leader development requirements.

This study added to scholarly research in at least three areas: defining paths to effective leader development for command at sea, preparing leaders to deal with the challenges of multi-gender, multi-generational organizations, and tracking responses to

changes in military organizations as articulated by the commanders responsible for effecting the change.

This study can aid naval leaders in implementing long-term strategic directions and maintaining the American Navy as a “Global Force For Good!” Additionally, this study can inform future policy development in developing diversity, implementing advances in technology, and aligning expectations.

### **Definition of Terms: Naval Terminology**

**Command.** The position of full accountability and authority assigned to one individual; an organization such as a ship, air squadron, or naval station. (U.S. Navy Regulations, 1990)

**Captain.** Rank of U.S. Navy; or the officer in command of a ship, station, or squadron. For those who use Navy slang, the term “Skipper” distinguishes an officer of junior rank in command from a Navy Captain in command. (Naval Historical and Heritage Command, 2010)

### **Sample Navy Ship Organization:**

**Bridge.** The wheelhouse and navigation station from where the Captain commands a ship and the Officers of the Deck control the ship’s business. (*SeaTalk Nautical Dictionary*)

**CO.** Commanding Officer. (COs plural form). (U.S. Navy, 1990)

**Executive Officer.** The number two officer in a Command organization chart. (XO). (U.S. Navy, 1990)

**Department Head.** Ships normally have five or more departments: Typically, these are Admin, Operations, Combat Systems, Engineering, and Supply. Officers leading the Operations, Combat Systems, and Engineering departments are the ones eligible for Command at sea. Typically, these are Lieutenants or Lieutenant Commanders with 6–12 years’ experience. (Naval Historical and Heritage Command, 2010)

**Division Officer.** The officer in charge of one of the Divisions in a Department. More junior; Ensigns, Lieutenants Junior Grade, or junior Lieutenants with fewer than five years’ experience serve in these roles. (Naval Historical and Heritage Command, 2010)

Wardroom. The collective of the commissioned officers assigned to the ship.

Chief's Mess. The collective for the Chief Petty Officers assigned to the ship. (Naval Historical and Heritage Command, 2010)

Enlisted Crew. Composed of Sailors of various rates and ratings.

Rates. The level of seniority range from E-1 to E-9 and serve as basis for pay scales and assignment routines. (Naval Historical and Heritage Command, 2010)

Ratings. The various technical specialties such as Boatswain's Mates, Hospital Corpsmen, and Information Technicians necessary to run the ships of the Fleet. (Naval Historical and Heritage Command, 2010)

Chief Petty Officer (CPO, Chief). A senior enlisted Sailor with 10-30 years' experience. Chiefs are broken into three grades—E-7, E-8 (Senior Chief), and E-9 (Master Chief). Recent advances in recognizing their importance have created Command Master Chief (CMC) and Fleet Master Chief levels. The Command Master Chief is a member of the triumvirate of the leadership team of the CO, XO, and CMC, now referred to in many Navy leadership publications. (Naval Historical and Heritage Command, 2010)

Petty Officer (E-4–E-6). Mid-level deck plate manages. First Class Petty Officers (E-6) serve as Work Center Supervisors. Second Class Petty Officers (E-5) and Third Class Petty Officers (E-4) serve as technicians and deckplate leaders. (Naval Historical and Heritage Command, 2010)

Seaman (E-1–E-3). The most junior members of the Navy. (Naval Historical and Heritage Command, 2010)

### **Ship Types and Classes.**

Ships are built as Types—Cruisers, Destroyers, Frigates (as a group known as 'CRUDES'), Amphibious Class ships (as a group known as 'AMPHIBs'), and as Classes; e.g., *Spruance* class Destroyer (DD 963), *Arleigh Burke* class Guide Missile Destroyer (DDG 51), *San Antonio* class Amphibious Transport Dock (LPD 17). (Naval Historical and Heritage Command, 2010)

Cruiser (CG). A more senior command, usually the Captain (O-6), has excelled in a previous command at sea. Since 1975, cruisers have shifted from steam powered by boilers or nuclear reactors to gas turbine propulsion. All have been "G" ships- missile shooters. (Naval Historical and Heritage Command, 2010)

Destroyer (DD/ DDG). The "workhorse of the Fleet." Normally a first Command. Since 1975, destroyers have been powered by gas turbine propulsion. The *Spruance* class ships were DDs. The *Burke* Class ships are DDGs. A "G"

means a ship is a missile shooter. Both serve as springboards to O-6 command. (Naval Historical and Heritage Command, 2010)

Frigate (FF/FFG). Normally a first Command. The FFs were steam powered. The FFGs were gas turbine powered. Both served as springboards to O-6 command. (Naval Historical and Heritage Command, 2010)

Landing Ship Dock (LSD). An Amphibious Warfare ship. (Naval Historical and Heritage Command, 2010)

Deckplates. Navy slang term for being down with the workers, especially in the engineering spaces. (Naval Historical and Heritage Command, 2010)

Aegis. Class of ship (current DDGs and CGs) as well as a capability of a total integrated air and missile defense system from platform to radar to missile control system. (Naval Historical and Heritage Command, 2010)

### **Navy Watershed Events**

Z-grams. A List of Policy Directives Issued by Admiral Zumwalt While in Office as Chief of Naval Operations, 1 July 1970 to 1 July 1974. (Naval Historical and Heritage Command, 2010).

Note: A Z-gram is properly known as a ZNavOp. Z-gram #1 became effective on 14 July 1970. All Z-grams were canceled in name only on the day Zumwalt left his post as Chief of Naval Operations (CNO). At that time, two Z-grams had previously been canceled and 87 had been, or were being, incorporated into the regular Navy directives system. The remaining 32 were informative in nature, announcing a one-time program or were statements of policy subsequently included throughout Navy personnel programs. Some of the Z-grams are on line. (Naval Historical and Heritage Command, 2008)

Tailhook. The reports of sexual harassment and aviators behaving badly from the 1991 Tailhook convention in Las Vegas became a 'watershed event that sent shockwaves through the Navy hierarchy' (Trongale, 2001, p. 5). Trongale said that for some, 'Tailhook represented the quintessential breakdown in Navy leadership, forcing a near decade of zero tolerance for mistakes by anyone at any level.' (Trongale, 2001, p. 5)

Bombing of USS *Cole*. On October 12, 2000 in Aden, Yemen, an Al-Qaeda sponsored small boat laden with explosives damaged USS *Cole* and killed 17 Sailors This attack began a series of Navy focused Antiterrorism/ Force protection (AT/FP) measures. The attack, following on the heels of previous attacks on American interests outside U.S. soil was a harbinger of the attacks on September 11, 2001. (Naval Historical and Heritage Command, 2008)

## **Navy Guidance.**

Naval Leadership. General Order 21 defines leadership as the art of accomplishing the Navy's mission through people. Leadership is the sum of those qualifications of intellect, human understanding, and moral character that enable a person to inspire and to manage a group of people successfully. (Montor, 1998)

Other definitions appear in Appendix A.

## **Assumptions and Limitations**

Every leadership role is a challenge (Kouzes & Posner, 2003), but command at sea is one of the most demanding. Success in command means meeting the challenges and completing the assigned mission. One of the major assumptions includes that findings on past studies for executive job demands parallel challenges faced by ship commander at sea. COs must be competent in all of the leadership and management domains required by leaders in public service organizations and business. They face the challenges of globalization, developing societies, and multigenerational workforces.

The study assumed that former COs would be forthcoming in discussing their command tours and that some common features of development, assignment, and meeting the challenges of command would be uncovered.

This study initially focused only on cruiser-destroyer-frigate COs and employed a convenience sample. The "Cruiser-Destroyer" force outnumbers the other ship class numbers by three to one, and would bound the number of cases explored. An overwhelming response from other ship type COs allowed the researcher to expand the initial population. Future scholars may discover that the challenges to commanding the Navy's amphibious warfare or auxiliary ships to be similar. Additionally, this study did

not delve into failures in command, but tried to elicit the keys that those who succeeded attributed to their success.

Efforts to apply means to remove the researcher's predilection or bias included such techniques as epoché (Gearing, 2004) or suspending judgment (Frew, 2004), and bracketing (Gearing, 2004; Bednall, 2007). The use of self-reported performance may not be as reliable indicators of actual performance in command (Ikomi & Guion, 2000).

### **Nature of the Study**

Command at sea has been a life-long fascination, as well as a lived experience. Challenges faced by commanders at sea mirror many of the problems of leaders and managers across a wide spectrum of organizations. Ships reflect the feeling of small towns and must carry on the normal business every hour of every day. Some new challenges may have arisen from the difference in generations who now serve on ships. According to Pew Research Center (2010), Generational analysis has established a distinguished place in social science; moreover, the PEW team also believed it was not only possible, but often highly illuminating, to search for the unique and distinctive characteristics of any given age group of Americans. Although Pew researchers have acknowledged that generational groupings and paradigms were not an exact science, Generational Theory is a viable concept and worthy of study as it applies to the challenges of command at sea. Bennis (2009) proposed looking at leadership as a play with settings, storylines, and actors with and props bringing about real consequences. Other background theory included the importance of institutional culture (Schein, 1996) and the nature of command (Keegan, 1987). Luthans, Luthans, Hodgetts, and Luthans

(2001) Positive Approach to Leadership (PAL) and Kilburg and Donohue's (2011) efforts to reconcile different views also centered the approach.

Methods on considering leadership challenges (Kouzes & Posner, 2003) and evaluating High Reliability Organization leader development (Compton, 2008) have parallels to discerning the challenges of command. Additionally, the concept of molding leader authenticity (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004) and Naval Leader Performance (Montor, 1998; Winnefeld, 2004) set the stage for evaluating the path to command.

This study was a qualitative case study exploring former commanding officers' descriptions of their experiences in Command. The study looked to understand how COs described their challenges and how they met them. It would not be surprising for a follow-on study to find differences in challenges as perceived by those who had command in the 2000s from those who commanded in the 1970s or the 1980s or even the 1990s. Building from memoirs of command at sea experiences produced by former destroyer Captains in each decade since 1975, the study planned to interview officers who commanded U.S. Navy destroyer-type ships in the 21st century and record their responses to challenging questions including:

- Why did you aspire to Command?
- What were your biggest challenges?
- What was your impression of your preparations—the Command pipeline?
- What new challenges arose that you solved?
- What parameters did you check to know you were succeeding?
- What advice would you offer those who desire to command at sea?

Concepts considered include perceived social and cultural changes, perceived generation gaps, measures of command effectiveness, effects of technology and pattern shifts, pivotal events, and the focus on expected adversary forces and missions.

### **Organization of the Remainder of the Study**

The remainder of the study reviews the literature and discusses the research methods employed to study commanding officers across generations. The literature review spanned the challenges of command over the ages, sought to define various measures of command effectiveness, and demonstrated how various leadership theories have applied to the exercise of command at sea. Additionally, the effects of transformation, historical developments, and even legislative changes have been included to understand the environment in which commanders exercised their opportunity in command.

The research method was a qualitative case study exploratory inquiry using semi-structured interviews and analysis of artifacts solicited from participating former ships' commanders. Follow-on studies could investigate other concepts that shape command experiences such as:

- A quantitative study that measures reactions to specific attributes discovered in this study.
- A mixed methods study combining the qualitative analysis of the effective results of Z-grams and resulting institutional changes followed by a quantitative investigation of the degree of changes attained, tracked by distinct periods.

- A combined set of studies tracing the results versus expectations of major policy shifts based on changing priorities, historical incidents, or Ship Manning Plans.
- An analysis of specific policy changes such as Duty section adjustments from one in three from the Vietnam–Cold War era to one in six and reductions back toward one in three to implement full force protection measures.
- A study that looks at how various commanders establish their “Battle Rhythm” or their conduct of day-to-day operations.
- A study that investigates effectiveness of the newly established policy of XO-to-CO Fleet Ups versus two separate tours, one for XO, then, selection and assignment to CO.

## **CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Command at sea is the ultimate goal for naval officers of the line. The literature review begins by exploring the concept of command and, especially, Command at sea. Then, following a discussion of the challenges of command, the study tracks through the paths to command and elucidates the methods to assess success in command. It then provides examples of Command leadership through personalized accounts of command at sea experiences prior to 2000.

Several previous scholars enlightened the path for this study. Conroy (2001) presented a comprehensive review of Navy leader education and training and applications from leader development courses since World War II. Trongale (2001) explored changes in naval leadership efforts since World War II (WW II). Robinson (2008) tracked the development of Surface Warfare Officer (SWO) training since WW II. Hoffman (2008), in an Education centered study, traced the development of leader credibility in leadership theories in each decade since 1900. Compton (2008) charted the course to leader development in high reliability organizations including merging leadership concepts with learning theories. Strauss and Howe (1991) opened the concept of generations having patterns with which, as a group, different generations envision the world differently.

A discussion of the concept of command begins by reviewing records of great commanders and introducing the special nature of command at sea. The review then presents the challenge of command as dictated by the actual regulations governing the expectations of all commanding officers throughout the U.S. Navy. The changing

environment for command resulted in new challenges for succeeding generations of commanding at sea. The review also analyzes the path to command and compares it to existing guidance for leadership and management development programs. Leadership and management development models emphasize track records of actual and observed experiences as necessities for the preparation of officers for command. Moreover, the discussion will address various leadership perspectives that have proved fruitful for successful command. The review then explores assessment methods and indicators for command effectiveness and lays out paths for derailment perhaps discovering parallels in leadership failures in various civilian pursuits. To set the stage for exploring the response to changing challenges in command, the study presents three different records of command experiences from the later part of the 20th century. Then, the trace shifts to set the course for discovering current and future challenges and command transitions. Finally, a short synopsis of qualitative research methods concludes this chapter.

### **The Concept and Nature of Command**

Command is a special phenomenon of leadership resident in hierarchical organizations. Command can be a verb, a subject, or an object. In this study, command focuses on the position as well as the person. Often in strategic parlance, command comes with control. Retired Air Force Colonel John Boyd delivered a short treatise to officers in the Pentagon asking what “Command and Control” meant. He led them to consider substituting “Appreciation and Leadership.” Appreciation meant understanding deeply—almost the Germanic *verstehen*. Leadership was getting people to do what it took to complete the mission (Hayes, 2008). From that scene, Boyd presented the “O–O–D–A

loop” as a decision cycle or command and control model. In any encounter, the one who could observe, orient, decide, and act inside the OODA cycle of the other could maintain the upper hand (Richards, 2004). Command and the commander have been analyzed by their times, their environments, and their challenges. The setting and the nature of their commands can be reviewed as theater, and command at sea as one such stage.

### **Commanders and Their Times**

Great leaders understand their environment and capitalize on their combined strengths to complete their goals. John Keegan (1987), in his case study of great leaders *Mask of Command*, noted that commanders’ environments form who they are and how they lead. Leaders perform as citizens of their time and place and of their societies. Using case studies based on four famous leaders from history and applying the “heroic leader” concept, he analyzed generals who displayed the “heroic” leadership model personified as Alexander, and then moved to the “anti-heroic” style of the Duke of Wellington, through an “unheroic” image as exhibited by Ulysses S. Grant, and concluded with the “false heroic” personified by Adolph Hitler. In seeking to find the commonalities of the great commanders, he recalled Clausewitz’ dictum that “War is the continuation of politics by other means” (von Clausewitz in Howard & Paret, (Eds.), 1976, p. 64). Keegan wrote that successful generals as leaders in war “inhaled war and politics in the same breath” (Keegan, 1987, p. 4). He noted that all accepted the interrelationship between force and persuasion almost without any reflection. These leaders also understood the limits to which the exercise of force could be usefully pushed; and all lived with the reality that there was only so much moral sacrifice to be extracted from their people, and only so much material sacrifice from their economic lives.

Keegan followed Clausewitz's logic in confirming that politics was an essential part of a soldier's business, and the essential link for the purpose and object of war (Keegan, 1987). Moreover, before Bennis (2009), Keegan parlayed top leadership as a performing art and noted that the men who served as those leaders played their appointed roles and pulled on the mask of command. Both Keegan and Bennis pointed to Shakespeare's works as an essential study of leaders—of humankind— and viewed many leadership efforts as theater, giving Keegan's work its "mask of command." The danger lurks in ensuring that what is behind the mask is authentic.

**Command as Theater.** Various authors have employed a theater metaphor for leaders. For all, the focus is on performance that satisfies the customers. Those customers include the followers for leaders who understand the concept of internal customers. Bell and Zemke (1990) discussed the importance of performance in service management. To develop service-centered, job-satisfied employees, Bell and Zemke noted that leadership develops through experience coupled with building successful relationships. Leaders obsessed about service, in words and deeds, serve as good role models. Customer-focused leaders can employ quality communications to promote understanding and imbue a shared vision to create trained, empowered, and adaptive employees (Bell & Zemke, 1990).

The Navy's primary performance focus is mission accomplishment through its people. Among the personal style characteristics desired were calmness, humility, and curiosity. Leaders must be fond of coaching and good at "closing" so that nothing falls through the cracks. The Navy's term for this level of effectiveness is *forehandedness*.

In presenting an even more insightful appraisal of the use of the theater metaphor, Mangham (1990) demonstrated that actors and managers have many parallels since both are involved in performing in person, live, and must execute day after day to read the situation to match their performance to their audience to create the right effect. Actors prepare their performances; and as they work on the plan; they practice and experiment, test tempos, observe responses, adjust and grow as they shape the role into one appropriate for the play. Both actors and naval leaders must balance response and stimulus. Their performances must complement the tradition and culture of the situation. Leaders employ routines in small acts to shape meaning and control response. As naval officers, one recognizes a script for command exists, although with much *ad libbing*. Naval leadership, especially for acts such as routine planning and controlling operations, can be interpreted and analyzed as exercised through scenes from continuing plays. Watching a ship's Navigational team chart the progress of a ship as it sails back into port, one can follow the timing, reports, and actions as a detailed sequence of choreography, speeches, dialogues, and movements. Doctrine, procedures, verbatim compliance, and educated judgment combine to create the overall effect of command.

**Stage Presence.** Keegan (1987) concluded that leadership was the key to advantage and conquest; but he wondered, who led and from where?-and from where? In front? Always, sometimes, never? His four case studies demonstrated that the position depended on the circumstances and the character and conduct of war at the time. A commander's own judgment of the threat and the opportunities (what we now understand as "SWOT" (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats) analysis) feeds into all decisions. The best commanders and leaders understood how to value information and

intelligence and prove Clausewitz's claim that all intelligence was worthless unless the commander could deal in uncertainty, ambiguity, and complexity.

Keegan focused on four leader models. Keegan chose Alexander to serve as his epitome of the heroic leader. He even empathized with their sacrifice and did not belittle their feelings of homesickness. Keegan called Wellington the anti-hero and noted his normal location as behind the lines and manner of taking long-term thinking positions. Keegan noted Grant, the first leader of "democratic" and ideological army, commanded not by fiat, but by vision and maintaining discipline through knowledge, communications, and a deep understanding of how the reports fit together for the fight. Keegan also noted the darker side of leadership and used Hitler to portray the cunning manipulation, and resulting effectiveness that allow some charismatic and visionary leaders to feed their megalomaniacal drive for power and control their blinded followers.

**A Mask for Command.** Employing the "mask" of the leader metaphor, Avolio et al. (2004) observed the process by which authentic leaders impact follower attitudes and behaviors. That impact is a major function of command success. Acknowledging the multifaceted aspects of leadership, Avolio et al. (2004) proposed an integrated model that acknowledged the importance of combining contributions from leadership experiences, positive psychology, emotion, and trust. The model included follower outcomes of positive performance such as determination and extra effort and withdrawal behaviors (e.g., turnover, tardiness, and absenteeism) (Avolio et al., 2004). Many of those metrics determine successful command performance.

**Unveiling the Mask.** To gain credibility, leaders must engage their followers, share critical information, and convey their perceptions and feelings about those whom

they lead. Authentic leaders encourage relationships through open communication (Avolio et al., 2004). Leaders employing authentic styles built realistic social relationships by arousing their followers to heightened levels of personal and social identification (Avolio et al., 2004). Moreover, since authentic leaders model high moral standards, integrity, and honesty, their favorable reputation fosters positive expectations among followers. These prospects enhance levels of trust by followers and build their willingness to cooperate with the leader for the benefit of the organization. Naval commanders who pursue this model of authentic leadership allow their followers to become more comfortable and empower them to execute the activities required for successful mission accomplishment (Abrashoff, 2002).

Thus, Avolio et al. (2004) concluded that authentic leadership positively affected follower positive emotions through identification with leaders, which then promoted positive follower attitudes and behaviors. Avolio et al. placed authentic leadership at the center of what constituted positive leadership. More importantly, Avolio et al. stressed the importance of further work to distinguish authentic leadership from existing theories of leadership such as transformational, charismatic, inspirational, and servant.

**Another Side of the Mask.** One question to ask about authentic leader development would be “Are leaders truly ‘on’ all the time; or do most lead exquisitely?” as (Quinn, 2005) declared, only when in a “fundamental state of leadership” (p. 75). In that state of being, leaders operated from fundamental values and capabilities in their discrete periods of greatness. Quinn laid out four questions for leadership self-assessment in this fundamental state: Am I results centered? Am I internally directed? Am I others focused? Am I externally open?

Quinn (2005) defined two states of leadership: normal and fundamental. Quinn noted that in the normal state, leaders appear comfort centered and risk averse. They remain externally directed and comply with others' wishes in an effort to keep the peace. Leaders in this state were self-focused and placed their own interests above those of the group. By maintaining an aura of being internally closed and blocking out external stimuli (perhaps alluding to the mask of command), leaders remained steady on task and avoided risk.

However, in the fundamental state, leaders became results centered and emboldened. Leaders ventured beyond familiar territory and pursued ambitious new outcomes. These leaders had become internally directed and behaved according to their values. Fundamental leaders shifted to an "others focus" and put the collective good first. Leaders in this fundamental state remained externally open, learned from their environment, and recognized when a need for change existed, and were more open to seize the initiative and make things happen. As discussed, the nautical term applied to this condition of leadership is *forehandedness*.

### **Command at Sea**

Naval officers who reach command are expected to be authentic and able to spin up to this fundamental state on demand. Building from Servant leadership, Admiral Vern Clark, CNO 2000–2005 termed this style as "covenant leadership" (Clark, 2001, p. 1). As he described it in a 2001 message, he noted that covenant leadership involved a promise for a promise. This bond existed when leaders make a promise to subordinates in return for their promise. For the Sailor, the promise is to support and defend the constitution. Clark promoted the critical importance for leaders to provide sailors with

the “tools and opportunities they need to train, to develop, to grow, to work in meaningful assignments in satisfactory work spaces, and to become leaders in their own right” (p. 2). Leader development is a chain. Naval leaders develop future naval leaders who develop future naval leaders.

**Responsibility versus Authority and Accountability.** *U.S. Navy Regulations* (1990) declare, “The responsibility of the commanding officer for his or her command is absolute” (p. 47). Moreover, “The authority of the commanding officer is commensurate with his or her responsibility” (p. 47). In addition, to make it clear, the regulation emphasizes that delegating authority to subordinates in no way “relieves the commanding officer of continued responsibility for the safety, well-being, and efficiency of the entire command” (*Navy Regulations*, 1990, p. 47). Thus is the mantle laid upon those in command.

Over the years, pundits outside the Naval profession have questioned the concepts regarding the authority, accountability, and responsibility of commanding officers (COs). In a special article about accountability, the *Wall Street Journal* noted that the tradition of total accountability of the sea was older even than the traditions of the country. In highlighting the important role of trust, the editorial noted, “Men will not long trust leaders who feel themselves beyond accountability for what they do. And when men lose confidence and trust in those who lead, order disintegrates into chaos and purposeful ships into uncontrollable derelicts” (*Wall Street Journal*; May 1952, quoted in Mack & Konetzni, 1982, p. 5).

**Chief of Naval Operations (CNO)’s Most Recent Guidance.** Admiral Jonathan Greenert as soon as he took over as CNO in September of 2011 directed a message to the

Commanding Officers across the Navy. Attached as Appendix B, the message implored those in command to “maintain the high standards required of commanding officers... and that accountability is based on trust” (Greenert, 2011).

*Navy Regulations. The Commanding Officer, Chapter 8.* *Navy Regulations* devote an entire chapter to the Commanding Officer. COs must be concerned with the welfare of their people. *Navy Regulations* expect commanding officers to employ all proper means to foster high morale, and to develop and strengthen the moral and spiritual well-being of the personnel under their commands. Additionally, commanders are enjoined to provide maximum opportunity for the free exercise of religion by members of the naval service and ensure that chaplains are provided the necessary logistic support.

### **Command at Sea Over the Ages**

A simple textbook provides succinct guidance to aid one preparing for command at sea. Captain Harley Cope’s first version of *Command at Sea* written in 1943 and revised twice since, in 1958 by Admiral Cope and in 1967 with Captain Howard Bucknell served as the “How-to” manual for ship’s commanding officers since World War II (Cope & Bucknell, 1967). The manual offered prospective commanding officers sage guidance about the meaning and execution of command at sea.

Following Bucknell, other officers (e.g., Mack, Konetzni, Stavridis, Girrier, etc.) have assumed the role as caretakers of the process of command. The versions point out three observations on Command at sea: Some things about Command will not change, some things will always change, and the key to success will be the CO’s ability to adapt. The following sections capture the manual’s transition through the generations from Veterans, to Boomers, to Xers, and anticipate the command timing of the Millennials.

Cope reminded the future COs about *Navy Regulations*' requirement for Exemplary Conduct by showing themselves to be good examples of virtue, honor, patriotism, and subordination. COs must be vigilant in inspecting the conduct of all persons under their command; guard against and suppress all dissolute and immoral practices. They are to take all necessary and proper measures to promote and safeguard the morale, the physical well-being, and the general welfare of the officers and enlisted persons under their command or charge (Stavridis & Mack, 1999). A recent directive in April of 2011 from the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Admiral Gary Roughead (2011), required future commanding officers to acknowledge their awareness and understanding of this guidance. This part of command will not change.

**Command at Sea, Joseph Conrad Quote—Every Version.** Mack and Konetzni (1982) related that the quotation (in Appendix C) on the privilege and burden of Command attributed to Joseph Conrad accompanied the letter sent from the Bureau of Naval Personnel to newly selected prospective commanding officers. If reading and considering those directives are not enough to inspire naval officers to be thinking seriously about command, perhaps nothing will.

**Evolutions of Admiral Cope's Publication: *Command at Sea*.** The concept of Command has slowly refined over the years. The foremost work designed to prepare U.S. Navy officers for command has been *Command at Sea* (Cope, 1943). Written originally in the midst of the Second World War when the Navy was building new ships, and even newer officers were rising to accept the responsibility of command, the book has remained relevant through succeeding officers keeping watch over the concept and

exercise of command at sea. The various revisions reflect changes of the times: professional, social, technical, threats, and shifting missions.

*1967 Update to Admiral Cope's Work by Bucknell.* Bucknell dedicated his revision to “the ‘old Timers’... who stand sponsor to every officer commanding our ships at sea” (Cope & Bucknell, 1967, p. v). Admiral John S. McCain, Senior, in his forward noted the key words in the publication were “mission, readiness, goals, and personnel.” Those concepts resonate among commanding officers today. McCain focused on leadership as man’s greatest achievement, defined it as the “ability to inspire officers and men of one’s command to maximum effort under all conditions” (Cope & Bucknell, 1967, p. vii), and called it “the single most important responsibility in the Navy” (p. viii). Bucknell acknowledged the potential exists for every commanding officer to be in a position of serving as an instrument of national policy. Cope and Bucknell (1967) noted that Command is a personalized calling. COs must be sensitive to the challenges of the environment. They cautioned that new COs should give all officers fresh starts and avoid prejudging officers before giving them chances to demonstrate their capabilities. All COs should build a Command Philosophy with the following components: fraternity-team building, maintaining a calm tone, and balancing restraint with action. COs must both give freely, yet hold back to have something in reserve to respond to unanticipated crises. COs must display loyalty and boldness, know how to mind their manners, and follow their hunches "to just go look" (Harvey, 2011) to satisfy their curiosity. COs must keep their standards high, and remain cheerful in spite of setbacks. Each will undergo a “metamorphosis” as those who command begin to appreciate higher level thinking and visioning. COs of the time could anticipate a quarterly schedule that would include

between 60–70 days at sea. “Haze Gray and Underway” had been a key feature in describing the destroyer Navy of the 20th century.

***1982 Update by Mack and Konetzni.*** Captain Harley Cope’s version of *Command at Sea* needed a facelift as the Navy approached the 1980s. Mack and Konetzni (1982), while staying true to the concepts laid out by Cope’s earlier work that had centered on command of ships, presented an updated version that included other command opportunities. The Navy focused on the complexity and sophistication represented by nuclear propulsion, guided missiles, and improved technology, and the continuous training and education of officers and sailors serving in ships at sea. The Navy of 1982 had become an all-volunteer force and was still recovering from the Vietnam syndrome. Among new topics covered were the concepts of the importance of the senior enlisted advisor or Command Master Chief (CMC), the CO’s role in Retention, and an emphasis on maintaining morale, while enforcing positive discipline. Mack and Konetzni reviewed directives on “minority affairs” in step with a national focus on Equal Opportunity. COs’ of the 1980s concerns centered on knowing the weather, succeeding in Independent Operations, and dealing with the dicey directions to “Prevent Incidents at Sea” when U.S. vessels were in the same area as ships of the fleet of the Soviet Union. The main message was know your ship, know your people, and complete the mission.

***1999 Update by Stavridis and Mack.*** Admiral Mack teamed with then Captain, now Admiral, Stavridis to produce a revised version of *Command at Sea* in 1999 to bring it up to date with changes in “how command at sea is executed” (Stavridis & Mack, 1999, p. vi). Stavridis had just completed his first command tour and added his insights to the challenges facing a new CO in the late 1990s. Stavridis and Mack included more

information on commanding air squadrons and submarines. Events and policy updates since 1982 included the 1986 Goldwater–Nichols Act, the demise of the Soviet Union, Desert Storm, Changes in the Joint World and the Unified Command Plan (UCP), and Lessons Learned from operations in the Persian (Arabian) Gulf, off Bosnia, and curtailing the Haitian migrations. Added to the Fleet were new vehicles: AEGIS cruisers and destroyers, the F/A 18 aircraft, and advanced nuclear powered submarines. Policy changes included full opening of all ships to Women. Programs now involved reliability-centered maintenance with detailed record keeping. ADP became *IT, internet, and net-centric*. Logistics was shifting to leaner, with less depth, and the explosion in computer and communication technologies led the rise of knowledge management. Command access to information and intelligence changed dramatically. Navy ship numbers declined from 570 in 1990 to 387 in 1999, with the number of Cruiser-Destroyer-Frigates dropping nearly in half, from 202 in 1982 to 116 in 1999.

The 1982 version had included a quotation from Edwin Rommel and focused much attention to dealing with the Navy of the Soviets. That threat dispatched, Stavridis and Mack eliminated the Rommel quote, but added thinking on weapons release authority to ensure each CO knew when to shoot to defend the ship. An interesting deletion was the previous warning on not reviewing officer performance reports from the previous CO, although the guidance is still in the directives. Moreover, probably responding to an uncomfortable rising trend in the length of Change of Command ceremonies, Stavridis and Mack (1999) reemphasized the note for on-coming COs to make extremely short remarks.

In studying the changes between these manuals, the main update shifted the number one focus from the ship to people coupled now as “know your command” (Mack & Konetzni, 1982, p. 17) and, reflecting the time, eliminated “gentleman and manly conduct” and “Act like a man” (Mack & Konetzni, 1982, p. 103). It also shifted the language to “Spouses” vice wives (Stavridis & Mack, 1999, p. 107). Interestingly, Stavridis and Mack employed the universal “he” throughout the rest of the book to be both masculine and feminine. Additionally, they added in the special relationships the new “Ombudsman” concept (a family representative for each command) and the Family Service Centers played in minimizing family problems and sustaining readiness.

The 1999 version still covered the standard operations at sea, but the section on new construction just skimmed dock trials and fitting out responsibilities. Stavridis and Mack combined several chapters such as Organization and Administration, and merged the Executive Officer section into the rest of Wardroom. Special concentration on the integrated use of computers and business technology explained the rise of the new department head called the “Combat Systems Officer” (Stavridis & Mack, 1999, p. 93) vice “Weapons Officer” and “Command and Control (C2)” became “C4” (Command, Control, Communications, and Computers) (p. 64). Additionally, the Navy was shifting its maintenance philosophy to align with the new Joint Fleet Maintenance Manual (JFMM), which directed precise methods for conducting repairs and performing preventive maintenance, and standardized quality expectations. Reflecting some pressures on the downsizing Navy, a noted shortage of Mess Specialists (MS) from 1982 persisted into the late 1990s.

Stavridis and Mack included the same six characteristics for officer leadership training, from the 1982 version. Personal characteristics focused on desire, moral leadership, personal relations with seniors, personal relations with juniors, techniques of counseling and communication, and the role of officers in training. In admonishing COs to strive to lead well, Stavridis and Mack employed the words of Secretary of the Navy Sean O’Keefe, on establishing the “heart of an officer” (Stavridis & Mack, 1999, p. 109) in their charges. Common sense and integrity were the two most important values. Although Mack and Konetzni (1982) discussed officer Fitness Reports (“Fitreps”), no accompanying guidance for enlisted evaluations was included as was presented in 1982. The standardization of routine included emphasis on proper administration of training and the Interdeployment Training Cycle. Mack and Konetzni (1982) had included extra emphasis on food service accountability that surprisingly was missing from the updated version. And, as will be disclosed, Stavridis and Mack (1999) made no mention of the Leadership Management Education and Training (LMET) program.

To reflect the times, the shift in mission focus was evident as discussions spotlighted more independent operations and non-war-at-sea missions. A new section described the necessity of the endeavor for attaining “Jointness” and the ultimate expectation that all officers begin to learn how to lead at the operational level. An important new consideration was the concept of “Getting back in the saddle” (Stavridis & Mack, 1999, p.243), the extra time spent before getting underway and the care for executing the first sea detail, especially when coming off a long layoff. As reflected in Captain Stavridis’s Command memoir, Mack and Stavridis felt the need to introduce combat traditions of the U.S. Navy, which included initiative, boldness, and daring,

tenacity, courage, aggressiveness, ingenuity, and the ingrained ability of young junior officers and enlisted men to display their own initiative and carry on if their seniors have been killed or disabled.

***2010 Update by Stavridis and Girrier.*** Admirals Stavridis and Girrier (2010) collaborated on the most recent update for a post 9/11 world. Since that horrific day, the Navy has published the new *Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* (Conway, Roughead, & Allen, 2007) based on a collaborative approach among nations, and now calls itself the “Global Force for Good.” The real threat of a terrorist attack on U.S. Forces actually became shocking reality a year before “9/11” when a small explosives-laden boat attacked USS *Cole* in Aden, Yemen.

Other new missions made the lexicon. Rather than direct combat at sea against the enemy, these new missions included Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA), Homeland Defense (HD), and anti-piracy. The world’s interconnected and global economies combined with freedom of the sea opened up opportunities for ulterior actions by non-legal armed forces and terrorist regimes and re-focused the Navy’s attention to historic and fundamental applications of sea power. The changing issues, new challenges, and operating patterns now included the Unified Command Plan (UCP) update that added a new Joint Force commander with responsibility for Africa: “AFRICOM.” Surface Fleet numbers had continued declining to 288 from 387 since 1999. The introduction of the modern Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) signaled a shift in the challenges of warfare at sea. The new Fleet Response Plan (FRP), designed to make ships more available for employment, also shifted the concept of a reset period between deployments. The plan expected a ship’s readiness would not deteriorate markedly. The

creation of CLASSRONs for the Surface Force designated squadron commands with the responsibility to manage ship classes for maintenance, training, and readiness; activities formerly conducted at the Type Commander level. Ships' manning now included a Training Officer billet to aid in the management of training information. This change countered experience and knowledge outflows, as well as handled the surplus of Junior Officers. Stavridis and Girrier added in an extra discussion of safety programs such as SUBSAFE to highlight the reasons behind programs that many felt were added administrative burdens, and they tried to address the issues of near continuous communications connectivity and the flattening chain of command.

Stavridis and Girrier (2010) thought it necessary to provide clarified guidance on the qualities and performance for commanding officers. They reminded COs that each Type Commander had lists of specific programs and conduct expected of COs. Most of those reflect the same concepts stressed in *Navy Regulations*. Their new list of CO characteristics reinforced *courage* by adding in moral with physical, and highlighted *tenacity* and *endurance* due to the increasing OPTEMPO. They also tried to caution COs concerning placing themselves into embarrassing situations, both in ship handling and in other professional or personal situations. In some ways, they forecast the negative impact of the cancellations of routine inspections and other readiness monitoring programs on ships' and CO's performance that Admiral Balisle blamed for the drop in materiel readiness across the surface force (Eyer, 2010).

### **Summary of Command and Special Nature of Command at Sea**

Command at sea is unique among the leadership challenges. Achieving the opportunity to command at sea entails meeting the performance standards to qualify,

having good timing, and passing the criteria for selection. Commanders are members of their time and beholden to many traditions of the service, yet will face pressures requiring them to challenge long-held assumptions and to adapt as required to meet changing conditions. Command will test their experience, knowledge, and abilities they brought to command along professional, technical, social, and personal scales. Capitalizing on observing other leaders' successes and shortcomings, learning from self-study, and reading critically and extensively about command, strategy, and tactics can augment a naval officer's preparation for command.

### **Rising Challenges to Command in the 21st Century**

Command at sea sets the stage for further important leadership assignments within the Navy or opens a path to further service as leaders in business, education, government, or industry. Commanding officers have always faced the pressure of focusing on mission accomplishment while taking care of their crews. Trust and credibility remain key ingredients for success. Advances in technology, communications, and people's expectations have shifted some of the challenges of command. Effects of Transformation, expanding professional concerns, and shifting missions have combined to increase the pressure to perform on individual commanders and their ships. Various programs such as the Z-grams of Admiral Elmo Zumwalt (Chief of Naval Operations, 1970–1974) and post-Vietnam studies, to the Goldwater–Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, the Tailhook Incident of 1991, and Department of Defense's (DOD's) Transformation efforts (1997–continuing) added pressures to executing command successfully.

## **Professionalism**

The challenge to military professionalism in the 21st century would be in three interconnected areas: intellectual, political, and moral (Kohn, 2009). The intellectual challenge has become establishing the capability to wage war across a multitude of venues without wasting the lives of soldiers or their equipment and supplies. Kohn (2009) noted the challenge of shrinking capabilities in numbers as well as rising threats from both state and non-state actors. The political challenge would be to ensure that the officer corps avoids partisan political divisions and remembers its place in the overall Chain of Command. Legally constituted civilian authorities head the top command structure; therefore, officers must establish effective working partnerships or collaborations with the civilian political leadership regardless of party or faction. Kohn tagged the challenge to professionalism as both moral and ethical. Officers must work at maintaining the honor, integrity, honesty, and self-sacrifice of the officer corps. That commitment of individual officers to the norms and values of personal and organizational behavior is what sanctions the contract for them to lead, and their subordinates to follow, in the heat and stress of battle (Kohn, 2009). The quality that builds to legitimacy is trust!

Some have warned that the Navy is precariously close to this tipping point (Hayes, 2008; Stavridis & Hagerott, 2009; O'Rourke, 2001). Kohn (2009) warned that professions face trouble in maintaining credibility if they cannot change themselves from within, cannot respond to the needs of their clients, and cannot enforce standards of behavior. Those are necessary ingredients to maintain the confidence of their constituencies while also inspiring the dedication and fidelity of their own members

(Kohn, 2009). Professions that rely on outsiders to correct their known deficiencies are in decline and unlikely to survive in their present form.

Navy Captain and professor at the Naval Academy Mark R. Hagerott found that as technological complexity increased, the Navy struggled to produce leaders who could understand technology and still act to integrate the operations of disparate parts of large organizations (Hagerott, 2008). He contended that in the late 20th century, the senior leader model in the U.S. military shifted from a *generalist* to what he chose to describe as a *technical specialist* model. His study argued that for six decades (from 1899 to 1963) Navy leadership affirmed the *generalist* as the preferred model for commanders. However, in the 1960s, the Navy abandoned the *generalist* model and Hagerott points to Admiral H. G. Rickover as the one responsible for the change. In the space of a decade, Rickover restructured assignment and education processes, as well as Naval Academy admissions criteria and curricula. Possessing a demanding personality, Rickover had a reputation of expecting excellence from every participant in every endeavor. Hagerott concluded that the restructured processes encouraged officers to value specialized technical expertise over integrated operational, strategic, and cultural knowledge (Hagerott, 2008). It is that *general knowledge* that contributes to the centerpieces of the new *Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* of building relationships and developing partners who will agree to work with us on future courses of action.

The time is nearing for the Navy to embrace even more self-reflection in leader development programs. In another attack on the remnants of Rickover's influence in the Submarine force, Laing (2009) complained about demanding styles of leadership submariners found necessary to maintain rigorous standards. He noted that the technical

culture of nuclear power allowed, and even, encouraged, negative leadership tactics. Using his first-hand experience and adding several “hearsay” vignettes, he related the common practices among the Submarine force Captains who employed fear, intimidation, and micromanagement through abrasive leadership. All of these factors were indicative of toxic leadership as described by Lipman-Blumen (2005) and found to be widespread among the U.S. Army (Mueller, 2011). Laing’s proposed solution was for upcoming submariners to adopt Servant Leadership and for the Navy to employ 360-degree feedback to aid resetting the culture.

### **Transformation Effects**

Transformation, coming on the heels of a “Revolution in Military Affairs” was hailed as a vital endeavor as the 21st century opened. Ronald O’Rourke, one of the key members of the Defense and National Security arm of the Congressional Research Office, in reviewing overall challenges faced by Congress in maintaining the Navy, laid out four general options for future U.S. Naval forces just prior to the attacks on 9/11. The first, continuing “on today's path” depended on sustaining the current (Summer 2001) collection of programs and level of resources. The second was attempting to sustain the programs by seeking additional resources needed to fund them fully. His “stretch option” included a force-structure expansion toward a fleet of something like 360 ships, which appeared beyond fiscal reach; and the strategy of “Transformation” by changing the current mix of programs (O’Rourke, 2001).

In the 2012 climate, projections are for an even lower budget to sustain the Navy. O’Rourke’s now 10-year old recommendations, which are being resurrected, included clarifying to people, both outside and inside the Naval community that transformation

had become an important Department of the Navy priority, even the top priority. O'Rourke recommended that the Navy expand research, development, testing, and evaluation (RDT&E) and experimentation. O'Rourke (2001) counseled that Naval leaders must work to assure stakeholders that transformation did not represent a "mortal threat to the Navy's or any specific organization's well-being" (p. 92). He also cautioned leaders to maintain a proper perspective of Network Centric Warfare (NCW). NCW initially offered great promise, but in the expanding Information Age, has made the "Fog of War" even denser.

**Budget and Planning Trends.** DOD's Transformation caught Congressional budgeters' and industry's attention. The possibility of cutting budgets and developing new paradigms for defense and security elicited defensive reactions from people and organizations in the National Security arena. O'Rourke noted that for transformation to succeed, leaders needed to develop incentives for those inside the Navy as well as businesses so all would sustain the hope they could succeed and advance in a transformative environment, and that businesses could remain confident of maintaining their profitability. Welsh (2006) declared that "Transformation Changes Everything" thus in the ever changing world of transformation no guarantees for success were available. Risks would be huge, and the price of choosing wrong very detrimental. Note that Welsh's concept would require a major cultural swing and revaluation of programs, policies, and practices throughout the Navy. Echoing the mantra from the Joint Staff, all were going to have to "adapt, shape, and respond to an uncertain future" (O'Rourke, 2001, p. 96.).

**Operational Concepts.** The concept of transformation highlighted the need for new operational concepts. Many of the proposed operational concepts for warfighting and crisis response operations included new ideas for how to maintain historic levels of forward-deployment and presence operations. A key goal was to identify concepts that could reduce the Navy's current “station-keeping multipliers”—the numbers of ships of given kinds needed to keep one such ship on station in an overseas operating area. O’Rourke (2001) claimed that the multipliers were considerably higher than people often accept. Although admirals have often asserted, with conviction over the years, that it takes three Navy ships to keep one on station, O’Rourke asserted that the actual station-keeping multipliers for Navy ships were closer to” five to one, or six to one for ships homeported in the continental United States” (O’Rourke, 2001, p. 96). The exact numbers depended on the “category of ship in question, the specific overseas operating area involved, and (for deployments to the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean region) whether the ship was homeported on the East or West Coast” (O’Rourke, 2001, p.97).

In the post-Cold War era, the Navy used these station-keeping multipliers extensively to justify force levels. The number of ships necessary to maintain established levels of presence overseas drove the Navy's force-structure requirements not expected warfighting needs (O'Rourke, 2001). The Navy’s Maritime Strategy presents “Presence” as a key attribute for maintaining the peace and preventing wars (U.S. Navy, 2008).

**Human Dimension of Transformation: Culture and Training.** The complex process of transforming the U.S. military and the Department of Defense has been evolving since the end of the Cold War. Successful transformation requires a cultural change that focuses on producing forces that, when integrated with all elements of

national power, will achieve desired effects to defeat any enemy's capabilities (Scurlock, 2004). Transformational thinking required assuring that committed forces would receive the necessary capabilities and resources in time to produce those desired effects to sustain the trust and confidence of the warfighters. The continued effort in training and operating as a joint force, with a focused effort in developing innovative solutions, encouraged by a military with a learning culture, would insure transformation remained on a logical path (Scurlock, 2004).

**Changes in Navy Leadership.** Many officers would agree that the elements that constitute naval leadership have changed since the 1970s. Trongale's (2001) dissertation, *Changes in Navy Leadership Since Vietnam*, used two participant groups. One was composed of officers and senior enlisted veterans from the Vietnam-era, and the second included post-Vietnam-era officers and senior enlisted veterans. He found that perception of changes in Navy leadership theory were viewed differently depending on the participant's race, gender, and rank, and that *Tailhook* was a "watershed" event that caused major changes in the views of role of women in combat. Additionally, Trongale asserted that further discussion should involve the effects of the post-Cold War drawdown as national and social events with far-reaching consequences beyond the naval establishment. Some of the causes he traced directly back to changes in leadership begun by Admiral Elmo Zumwalt.

President Richard Nixon appointed Elmo Zumwalt to serve as Chief of Naval Operations in 1970, though it is unlikely he could have anticipated that Zumwalt would become a cultural lightning rod within the service (Combs and Karcher, 2004). Zumwalt served as CNO from 1970 through 1974. In a post-mortem, Cutler (2000) wondered if

Zumwalt should be seen as hero or heretic. Most controversial of Zumwalt's methods were his aptly named “Z-grams,” many that addressed personnel retention problems in the Navy. Keeping to his philosophy that unconventional changes needed unconventional methods of implementation if they were to succeed; Zumwalt used the Z-gram method as a means of communicating his changes simultaneously and directly to all personnel in the Navy (Cutler, 2000). The personnel changes wrought by Z-grams were generally popular among the younger officers and enlisted men, less so among more senior personnel. Some senior officers and petty officers felt that the method and the content of the Z-grams had undermined their authority. Others lauded the changes but resented the use of so unconventional a method of bringing them about. The results were indisputable; never before in the history of the Navy had such sweeping changes taken place. Gone were many of the so-called “chicken regs.” Suddenly, the family and the individual had taken on a new significance, and in his first year in office, first-term reenlistments rose from 10% to 17%. The new volunteer force was being born.

Glancing back thirty years later, Cutler (2000) could name no other leader more responsible for the culture of the all-volunteer Navy. Zumwalt did away with what many saw as relics of a Navy era gone by, such as rules forcing sailors to wear their uniforms even when on leave and liberty. He expanded opportunities for women, African Americans, and other minorities, and made the first steps toward bringing decentralized management into the public sector. Zumwalt had succeeded in transforming the Navy from its image of a “humorless, tradition-bound, starchy institution” (Cutler, 2000, p. 10). In fact, Zumwalt was so successful that his efforts captured the attention of the national

media, making him the most famous admiral since Admirals Halsey and Nimitz captured the attention of the American public during World War II (Cutler, 2000).

**United States Navy Ethos.** The Navy Ethos (Appendix D), introduced in 2008, was developed to reflect the values integral to mission accomplishment for active and reserve Sailors and Navy civilians, regardless of assigned unit, command or community. Another study could attempt to discover the background and the impetus for such a statement.

### **Studies on Command at Sea**

Few studies on command at sea exist in the in the public domain. Those on individual COs cover topics focused on self-efficacy, servant leadership, covenant leadership, and special challenges of command.

**Naval Officers' Self-Efficacy and Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and Transformational Leadership.** Confidence is a key driver of command excellence. Commanding officers must remain steady and emotionally balanced during their most stressful times. Awadzi-Calloway (2010) conducted a quantitative study to address the roles Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and transformational leadership affect Navy leader development of the competency known as “self-efficacy” and the ensuing impact on performance. In surveys of a population of naval personnel across various ranks and expertise, she concluded that: challenge the process, enabling others to act and encourage the heart, were the three most significant transformational leadership skills that contribute to the development of emotional intelligence in a military leader. The use of emotion was the most significant emotional intelligence competency to the development of transformational leadership skills (Awadzi-Calloway, 2010). She also concluded that

emotional intelligence and transformational leadership contribute to a leader's self-efficacy. She found that EQ was more necessary than transformational leadership for achieving high levels of self-efficacy among naval leaders. In many descriptions, self-efficacy mirrors the concepts of drive, determination, and confidence. Self-efficacy results from past proven performance. Nothing succeeds like success.

**COs as Servant Leaders.** Servant leadership models appeal to many naval leaders. Beck (2010) set out to discover the antecedents to servant leadership and the prospect of developing them in future leaders. His central question sought to discover the characteristics, behaviors, or life experiences that would predict a servant leader. His two-phase mixed methods inquiry discerned six key findings:

- The longer a leader is in a leadership role, the more frequent the servant leader behaviors.
- Leaders that volunteer at least one hour per week demonstrated higher servant leader behaviors.
- Servant leaders influenced others through building trusting relationships.
- Servant leaders demonstrated an altruistic mindset.
- Servant leaders are characterized by interpersonal competence.
- Servant leaders may not necessarily lead from the front, or the top of the organization. (Beck, 2010, p. 51)

Beck's study serves as one end of prospective behaviors of those in Command. Servant leader models are not confined to the Navy. Farmer (2010) investigated the rise of the Servant leadership model among senior military officers from all services. Using Wong and Page's Servant Leader Profile-Revised (2003), Farmer executed a quantitative analysis of the tendency to employ servant leadership characteristics based on combat experience, operational specialty, gender, age, and branch of service. Interestingly, over

80 percent of those surveyed indicated positive tendencies to employ servant leadership. However, among those with combat experience, the pride and abuse of power components rated more negatively than would be necessary to support fully the rise of servant leaders. Farmer suggested the military had much work to do to educate leaders on the abuse of power and the leadership techniques required to serve humbly, rather than from a sense of entitlement. Often, it is exactly the feeling of entitlement based on long-term sacrifice that causes some of the best to fail at the top.

Naval leaders, especially those in command, often develop many characteristics of servant leaders. Self-awareness, reflection, and self-efficacy were among the primary words the participants identified as servant leaders used to describe their operative leadership style. Trust developed through relationships and consistency such as “walking the talk” or “modeling the way” (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, p. 9) are also key factors in Command effectiveness.

**Covenant Leadership and Commanding Officers.** An extension of the servant leader model was the concept of Covenant Leadership espoused by then CNO Admiral Vern Clark from 2001–2005. (Hackney (2004), using a qualitative approach, explored the Navy adoption of the Covenant form of leadership. Using one-on-one interviews and focus groups, she assembled data to aid her analysis to compare a contractual form of leadership with the new covenant framework espoused by Admiral Clark (Hackney, 2004). She noted that the command climate, or organizational culture, resulted from the leadership style of the commanding officer (CO). Her research investigated the leadership styles of two surface ships’ COs serving in Amphibious Group Two, and addressed their effectiveness in performing as covenant leaders. She discovered that the

operating culture of the surface ships impeded the actual implementation of the Covenant model; and, in disregarding the guidance of Connaughton, Lawrence, and Ruben (2003), a Navy-approved approach to covenant leadership did not yet exist. Each CO seemed to exhibit an individualized leadership method that was an amalgamation of various models focusing on mission accomplishment. She did join the growing chorus of the need for developing a 360-degree feedback mechanism for assessing Navy leaders. An assessment based on the 360-degree method is currently in use at the Navy's Executive Leadership Course.

### **Special Challenges in Command**

All ships' COs face similar challenges of finding the way to optimize performance, retain their best, ensure the continuation of excellence, and repair what must be fixed on their watch. The next group of studies report unique circumstances faced by some COs.

**COs and the Decommissioning Process.** One of the most challenging assignments for any officer in the Navy is to be on the crew that must decommission a ship. Working together to take what was once a mighty warship, the CO, officers, and crew prepare it for dismantling, salvage, or even serving as a target to make a synthetic reef. McGlynn (2005) covered the leadership challenges on Navy ships facing decommissioning. Using experiences of ships going through the decommissioning process, he worked to describe the perceptions of ship leaders on the decommissioning process and their leadership challenges. McGlynn sought to discover the secrets and motivational techniques that COs employed to sustain the crew during the march to the last day of the ship. He interviewed the "triad" of leaders from various vessels under

going the decommissioning process: the CO, the XO, and the Command Master Chief (CMC). McGlynn found eleven important themes to represent the challenges present in those commands. Maintaining a focus on mission was easier based on “whether the ship remained operational or lingered in a non-operational status.” COs succeeded when they focused on the task-at-hand; making a successful transition became the new *mission*. The crew provided daily examples of *pride* knowing the jobs were being done well. Successful COs kept emotions in check and addressed rumors by keeping information flowing and available to all. COs stayed motivated to help all understand the mission and envision a successful decommissioning process. All CO, XO, and CMC teams learned to overcome *denial* as one of the faces of change. Successful decommissioning COs worked for maximum *Recapitalization*, which all found could be made one of the purposes of the effort. The CO, XO, and CMC teams worked to maintain upbeat-positive attitudes. They all worked for *Buy-in*. Each team relayed stories of how they dealt with regret of seeing the end of a mighty warship. Perhaps some of these will be found among those in command in this study.

**Interim COs.** As with many lines of work, the Navy has also been forced to deal with leaders’ failures while serving in top leadership positions. COs’ failures leave tremendous voids in those left behind, and the entire organization struggles to re-establish command confidence and a new path to excellence. Chatfield (2009) covered the challenges on the path to restore confidence by interim COs, those who take over for Command failures. Chatfield employed a grounded theory approach to understand more fully the experience of those who served as “Interim” commanding officers. After interviewing eleven interim Surface COs, three variables emerged: interim CO’s

confidence (self-efficacy), a focus on restoring crew confidence, and the time necessary to restore external confidence in command leadership and mission readiness. The first hurdle interim COs faced was discovering whom to trust so they could begin establishing the relationships to lead successfully. Some of the findings appeared to support aspects of the Covenant leadership model.

### **Cultural Impact of Naval Tradition: Strength and Tyranny**

Navies have long and established traditions and have been very slow to adjust to the changes of the times be they technical, relationships, or otherwise. Paron (2000) reviewed Roger's report of the process the British Royal Navy followed to use citrus to rid their ships of the scourge of scurvy. From early indicators in 1601 A.D. and even with confirming evidence thirty years later, it took the Royal Navy nearly 150 years to rediscover the power of citrus, and another fifty still, until 1795, to mandate citrus on long voyages. The U.S. Navy needed nearly 30 years to eliminate flogging from an 1820 directive to its elimination in 1850.

**Culture Shift from "Equal Opportunity" to "Diversity."** The first black officers were commissioned during World War II and the 1947 DOD act opened most ratings to all. Samuel Gravely, who later became the Navy's first black admiral, achieved command in 1962, and later became the first black officer selected for cruiser command in 1970 of USS *Jouett*.

Tracking the Navy's response after Admiral Zumwalt's 1972 Z-gram declared the Navy's commitment to equal rights and the enhanced opportunities for women paints an interesting picture. As the advertisement said: "You've come along way baby," the news of women in the Navy raised some eyebrows among the "old salts." Although women in

auxiliary volunteer service (WAVEs) had been around since the first World War, the old boy network was strong as ever. Besch (2001) reported of a ditty, which appeared in Newport Training Station *Gazette* in April 1917, which expressed some of the tone of the day:

#### Invasion of the Sailorettes

“O, what’s this Navy coming to!” asks Sails of Chips today,  
“They’re enlisting lady sailors for to take our jobs away;  
I’ll bet my breeks inside two weeks I’ll have to abdicate  
And lose my station billet to some blushin’ seamstress’ mate.”  
“Don’t worry so,” says Chips to Sails, “for I can plainly see  
The pluckin board could ill afford to send us all to sea,  
But if they’re shippin’ women and they keep on comin’ in ’  
Tis safe to bet that we will get a striker feminine.” (Besch, p. 24).

“Striker” is a Navy term meaning a helper or apprentice who is seeking practical on-the-job training to gain a particular rating and learns in the job, usually at sea. The same arguments resounded across the force in the 1970s.

Women in the Navy were a long way from full opportunity. Although women served in the Navy following World War I and throughout World War II and into the Nuclear Age, it was only in 1972 when Z-Gram 116 directed eliminating the separate management of men and women officers and opened command opportunity to qualified women. Z-Gram 116 authorized entry of enlisted women into all ratings and completed the opening of all staff corps to women. At the Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS), the program integrated male/female detailing; and across the country, the Naval Reserve

Officers Training Corps (NROTC) was opened to women. In 1978, Congress approved a change to the combat exclusion law to permit the Navy to assign women to support ships and non-combatant ships, putting the Women in Ships program into force. Surface Warfare and Special Operations communities were opened to women. By 1986, the first woman Surface Warfare Officer (SWO) was assigned as XO afloat; and in 1990—LCDR Darlene Iskra, a Navy Diver as well, became the first woman to assume command of ship USS *Opportune*, a salvage and rescue ship out of Pearl Harbor, HI (Iskra, 2007).

Following the post-Tailhook upheaval in the 1990s, by 1994, all ships became open for women when so fitted. Two more milestones occurred in 1998: CDR Maureen A. Farren became the first woman to command a combatant ship (LSD) and in December, CDR Kathleen McGrath assumed command of USS *Jarrett* (FFG 33). In 2010, women comprised 16 percent of the Navy and 8.9 percent of the unrestricted line (URLs).

**Tyranny of Distance.** One cultural transition that naval officers must learn to deal with and may influence the pace of change is the “tyranny of distance” (Scales & Wortzel, 1999, p. 28; Bowie, 2004, p. 133). Getting the fleet to the fight takes time even though the propulsion for ships has changed from sail to steam to gas turbines. The sailing or “steaming” time from Norfolk, the main naval operating base on the east coast, to the middle of the Mediterranean still takes 10 days at current transit speeds; add 25 more days to place the ship into the Persian gulf going through the Suez canal and around the Arabian peninsula. West coast transits are similarly long, two weeks from San Diego to the South China Sea (no stops) and another three weeks across the Indian Ocean to the Persian Gulf operating stations.

Naval officers experience this delayed time factor in a micro-sense by observing the time it takes a ship to change course by 90 degrees. From the order, “Right Standard Rudder” to the report “Steady on new course 090” takes several minutes regardless of ship types. Larger course changes take longer. Naval officers who experience this “lag” in response while driving ships can translate the concept into their future assignments ashore in policy and planning: Making changes takes time; the larger the change, the longer it takes. Naval officers who recall their time with the Conn understand this, and succeed more often than those who demand instantaneous results. Patience helps align expectations.

**Battle Rhythm.** One term used in command of military operations is “Battle rhythm.” Officially defined as the “process where the commander and his staff synchronize the daily operating tempo within the planning, decision, execution, and assessment (PDE&A) cycle to allow the commander to make timely decisions”(JP 1-02, p. 37). This PDE&A parallels the “OODA loop” conceived by John Boyd discussed earlier (p. 18-19), a model of the nonstop decision to action cycle as “Orient, Observe, Decide, Act” in a continuous loop with the advanced versions showing feedback as well as feed forward loops (Box, Byus, Fogliasso, & Miller, 2007; Richards, 2004). The purpose of battle rhythm management is the maintenance of synchronized activity and process among distributed warfighters. In many ways, both the Navy’s materiel and personnel have been wearing out since the post Desert Storm, end of Cold War period.

### **Challenges of the Operating Environment**

Leaders must operate in an environment that includes their followers, resources, and the mission, and face challenges across professional, technical, social, or personal

boundaries. Professionalism has been a principle objective of naval officer development. Brooks (1980) reviewed the professional concerns as reflected in the professional journal of the U.S. Naval Institute. His specific aims were to test several preconceptions. One was that the Navy had never been able to prove the value of naval forces, in terms that convinced the administration or even the public (Etzold, 1978 in Brooks, 1980).

Another was that this inability to construct a defining role of the Navy in national defenses could be attributed to the naval officers' lack of professional thinking about naval missions and national strategy (Brooks, 1980). His final preconception was based on his feeling that "disproportionate amount" of thinking on naval strategy was been done by nonmilitary scholars and potentially reflected a lack of involvement in the debate contrary to the "legendary golden age of Mahanian thought" (Brooks, 1980, p. 46). He chose to focus on a slice of articles that represented the time that the then current flag officers were in their mid-grade assignments. For flag officers in 1980, that would have been the period between 1964 and 1968. Brooks found six basic themes: professionalism (leadership ethics and relations), internal functioning of the Navy (seamanship, tactics hardware and systems), non-military aspects of the sea (oceanography, law of the sea and merchant marine), other military forces (allies, adversary as USSR and other foreign naval forces), the World (Soviet Union and other areas), and naval and National Strategy. Intrigued by discovering that less than ten percent of the articles concentrated on strategic thinking, he reviewed other periods; notably from the years preceding the two great wars of the 20th century, and found articles, at that time, also concentrated more on day-to-day operations rather than on long-term strategy or policy. Brooks concluded that the lack of a reflective look on the purpose of the Navy, especially by those of the naval profession,

would someday lead to a necessity to convince the country of the importance of a Navy if the circumstances of the world ever changed. Now 30 years later in the Navy's recent efforts to have a conversation with the country about the new maritime strategy, it seems that time has come.

### **27-Month Nominal Schedule for Naval Surface Combatants**

Navy Surface combatants expect to follow a standard schedule laid out in five phases over a nominal 27-month cycle. The schedule begins with a Maintenance phase of 4–6 months. Following completion of the maintenance phase, the ship enters the 6–7 month Basic phase to train and qualify on systems and practices within the lifelines to prepare for assignment to squadron or group operations. Following Basic certification of engineering, damage control, and self-defense capabilities, the ship enters Integrated training, learns its role in assigned mission areas, and develops expertise in managing assignments to meet expectations in multi-threat scenarios. Integrated/Advance training is between 2–4 months. Deployment lasts for 7 months, then the ship has 3–4 months to recover, conduct local operations, or make short-notice (less than two month) deployments, and prepare for maintenance. A nominal CO tour is two years in length and not necessarily planned around “convenient” times in the schedule. Discovering when in the cycle a CO took over may lead to uncovering specific challenges of command to define and investigate.

### **Challenges of Leadership and Individual Performance**

Experienced operators have been observed to lose their edge when placed into leadership roles. Role overload occurs when a person cannot meet all assigned

responsibilities. Day, Sin, and Chen (2004) of Pennsylvania State University investigated the effect of role overload and perceived burdens or benefits of leadership on individual performance over time. Whether an assigned leadership role as “Captain” caused a role overload and poorer individual performance had been a long-term discussion among some players and coaches in the league. Their study sample focused on team captaincy in the National Hockey League and found that “being a captain was associated with better intra-individual performance” (Day et al., 2004, p. 588). Moreover, even when it seemed that individual performance waned when one was captain, other factors weighed more heavily such as age and number of injuries over a career. An extension to naval officers might be made since the CO is held in high esteem and is positioned to affect the command’s performance overall. This study may be a prelude to learning the effect of the new “Executive Officer to Commanding Officer Fleet Up” (XO-CO Fleetup) policy. How long does it take the old XO to become effective as the new CO?

### **Summary of the Challenges of Command in the 21st Century**

The challenges of command at sea can be divided into cultural, professional, personal, and operational slices with overlaps. COs have had to adapt in changes in the leadership model acceptable for command, the rise of programs emphasizing inclusion, diversity, and technical management schemes. Additionally, new international security challenges that the Navy has chosen to meet reflect the shifting environment of the maritime commons. Fewer ships mean longer periods at sea and a reduction in opportunities to experience routine evolutions in entering or leaving port. Capable mariner achievement occurs in a great space once reserved for initiative, discovery, and

self-efficacy that now competes daily with advances in technology, the explosion of information, and implementation of new management programs.

### **The Path to Command**

For those naval officers who pay attention, and sustain their desire and hunger for command, the Navy developed paths to command through formal education and training and systematic progression of assignments over the years. Leadership training has been a major part of all officer development programs. A central resource over the years has been readings in Naval leadership assembled by the U.S. Naval Academy faculty directed by Dr. Karel Montor, professor of leadership. Admiral Kinnaird McKee, Superintendent 1975–1978, and later, the relief for Admiral Hyman G. Rickover as Director of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion, directed that the book for leadership studies at the Naval Academy not be a text from other management or leadership instruction manuals, but be produced and sustained by the faculty of the institution whose mission is to:

To develop Midshipmen morally, mentally and physically and to imbue them with the highest ideals of duty, honor and loyalty in order to graduate leaders who are dedicated to a career of naval service and have potential for future development in mind and character, to assume the highest responsibilities of command, citizenship, and government. (USNA, 2010, May 18)

Most naval officers' never-ending leadership development begins with the Naval Leadership course based on a collection of "Voices of Experience" (Montor, Ciotti, Wolfe, & United States Naval Academy, 1984). Dr. Montor stated the book was "designed to be the final leadership text for those who are to be commissioned in the naval service." Targeted at midshipmen, officer candidates, and junior officers, Montor's work serves as the premier text for leader development in both the Navy and the Marine

Corps. From a loose collection of readings in the 1970s, first published as *Fundamentals of Naval Leadership* in 1984, *Naval leadership: Voices of Experience* covered the principles of naval leadership on many topics including motivational theory and the qualities of leadership. Essays discussed mission accomplishment, morale, integrity, self-discipline, judgment, pressure, motivation, and professionalism. The book distilled the experience and decisions of some of history's most successful military leaders. Of interesting note, the 1998 work includes articles from 1983 by Lieutenant Colonel David Petraeus, U.S. Army, and now General Petraeus, Director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, and Lieutenant Commander James Stavridis, now Admiral Stavridis, Commander, U.S. Forces Europe.

Montor, Ciotti, Wolfe, and United States Naval Academy (1984) opened the discussion of successful leadership by challenging midshipmen to read the book as well as to learn from their oncoming years of experience to prepare for higher command. Early studies of military exploits served as the bases for the tailored experiences of leaders. These vignettes set marks for future leaders as they learn to assess their own effectiveness. Midshipmen were advised to observe leaders, both officer and enlisted, and to try to discern enviable patterns and various traits that seem to impel leadership; and conversely, understand that some leaders have made mistakes that the new officers must avoid in their own careers.

### **Developing the Future Commanders**

Since the 1950s, the power source of the vehicles of the U.S. Navy's surface ships for command at sea shifted from steam driven destroyers and cruisers to sleek gas turbine powered frigates and Aegis cruisers. Hagerott (2008) explored the changing nature of

Naval officer leadership and professionalism from being a generalist to having extreme technical competence. Today, new ships of advance designs and operating concepts lay on the horizon to aid the fight in the littoral. He contended that the need for technical prowess has taken away from naval officers' expertise in the political and warfighting arenas. He pointed a finger at Admiral Rickover who, with his brilliance at creating a nuclear powered and technical Navy, pulled officers away from the study of war and statesmanship. He offered some course changes for officer development, including learning a foreign language and appreciating the history of navies and the nations.

**Future Admirals.** The senior leaders of the Navy, Admirals or "Flag" officers, all have held command. Those destined for the highest levels have commanded successfully at sea. Goff (2010) looked at the Navy's approach to strategic leader development in a phenomenological study of 14 Rear Admirals' interpretations of the effectiveness of their preparation and continued executive development. The "junior" level of Flag Officers interviewed felt they were still below the strategic decision making level and acknowledged spending more of their resources on their own organization advancement and performance. These Flag Officers agreed their value for strategic leadership depended on their continued excellent performance in their coming assignments, with operational duties being the key. Most demonstrated low value added from the Navy's attempts to educate them as strategic leaders, some indicating it was too little, too late. Most expressed a degree of dissatisfaction with the presence of mentors, specific expectations, and their future development as leaders. Many placed little reliance on the retired Vice Admiral who directed the Executive Business Course for the

CNO, perhaps because of the generation gap between him as a “veteran” and them as “boomers.”

**Naval Officers and Generational Effects: Do Generational Gaps Exist?** Since the preponderance of a ship’s crew is under twenty-five years in age, and the COs are around 40, the potential for differences exists due to the variance in generation and maturity. Navy Commander J. A. Barber (1970) investigated the perceived “generation Gap” between officers over 30 and under 30. Using officers at the Naval War College and prospective officers at OCS in Newport, he found neither group was homogenous; but the preponderance of differences found younger officers more liberal, more concerned with domestic issues, such as social justice, less worried about national security, more isolationist, and less often favored use of military force. The degree of overlap in attitudes surprised Barber since majorities in both groups selected moderate answers. The typical officer candidate was no more wild-eyed radical than a typical War College student was a militarist. He found nothing to indicate that the attitude of the new officers would interfere with their performance. The apparent gap was real, but not unbridgeable. The new generation Ensign did not see the world as the current Lieutenant Commander saw it. Barber cautioned, “understanding those differences will help build that close rapport between commanders and the officers they would lead” (Barber, 1970, p. 32).

**Army Officer Studies.** Officers from different generations pose special challenges to those in command. Wong (2000) stated that today’s senior officers of the U.S. Army did not understand today’s junior officers or their perspectives. Although senior officers think they understand the worlds of lieutenants and captains (equivalents

to Navy Ensigns and Lieutenants), many junior officers are convinced that their seniors do not. Increasing numbers of junior officers have become persuaded that the Army's senior leadership was not connected to the "reality of the trenches" (Wong, 2000, p. 3). Wong noted that events and policies such as the Army's downsizing, the abandoned effort in Somalia, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," and other current issues shaped the attitudes and views of Generation X officers. Wong followed Strauss and Howe's current generational cohort theory proclamations that "Generational differences emerge as cohorts experience defining moments in history which shape their attitudes and perspectives" (p. 6). He continued by declaring that although the "hardworking Boomers won the Cold War and saved our way of life from the Evil Empire," but the "overworking Boomers...brought zero defects, careerism, and new accusations of micromanagement to the Army" (Wong, 2000, p. 10). The court martial of the Sergeant Major of the Army, the reprimand of Major General Hale, and general-on-general sexual harassment further exaggerated Gen X officers' skeptical attitudes toward authority based on their life events prior to entering the Army (Wong, 2000).

Retention is a major challenge of the "all Volunteer" force. Triscari (2002) explored sociological factors that affected officer retention also focusing on generational differences in the officer corps in the U.S. Army. He recommended that senior officers develop a greater understanding of these generational differences in order to retain, train, and understand future junior officers. Triscari found the connection between generational differences and retention were sociological differences that made up the character of each generation (Strauss & Howe, 1992). These included: "values, economic trends, changing enemy threats, milestone events, gender and race relationships, career stages and

development, and technological advances” (Triscari, 2002, p. 3). In defining the gap, he acknowledged that the baby boomers had been the generation that put Affirmative Action on the front burner of American politics and had a “great amount of emotional energy invested in it” (p. 15). On the other hand, Generation X grew up integrated so that race and gender equality were facts and less of an issue for co-existing in organizations. Similar to Barber in 1970, he concluded: “By understanding the differences, key similarities may be used to build the relationship between junior and senior officers” (Triscari, 2002, p. 21).

### **Leader Development Programs**

The constant assumption for all leader development programs is that leaders can be made. Successful leadership theory and practice requires leadership development practices to embrace and refine higher order thought processes of those who would lead (Gambrell, Matkin, & Burbach, 2011). Whether the concept is task focused or relationship focused, the “hows” of leadership and the assessment of effectiveness can be molded to fit the situation and circumstances of those who lead (Connaughton, Lawrence, & Ruben, 2003). According to Gambrell et al., leader development programs should challenge future leaders to higher levels of thinking about practical applications of their leadership philosophy and research. Leader improvement initiatives must expect leaders to have begun the process of cultivating themselves as well as others. Cultivated leaders can then challenge themselves and their successors to evaluate and confront the biases, perceptions, and agendas in which they operate. Most Navy leader development programs adhere to this guidance.

**Leadership Development Theories.** Bennis (2004) in a tribute to Shakespeare's knowledge of leaders from *As you Like It*, laid out a quick model for life-long development of a leader. Beginning from an "Infant executive" (p. 48) with lots to learn and varying capacities to the first leadership position as the "Schoolboy with a shining face" (p. 49), Bennis emphasizes the importance of the first acts as stage setters for future challenges and success. He continues in metaphor with the "Lover with woeful ballad" (p. 49) as a rising successful-so-far leader continues to develop and expand one's capabilities. Bennis resumes with the promoted leader now as a "Bearded soldier" (p. 50) who encourages others and remains authentic, grounded in ever improving character and begins developing others, and expands to "The General, Full of Wise Saws" (p. 51) who remained grounded in truth and connected to all levels, not forgetting from whence he rose. This perspective and reflection allows one to become "The statesman" (p. 53) "hard at work preparing to pass on his or her wisdom in the interest of the organization" (p.53) and continue as "The sage" (p. 53) as mentor and confidant. Bennis related that the "ruling quality of leaders, adaptive capacity, is what allows true leaders to make the nimble decisions that bring success" (Bennis, 2004, p.53).

Officers must develop confidence in their abilities to command. High performance in a variety of assignments leads to more challenging assignments and ultimately selection for command. Larsson, Bartone, Bos-Bakx, Danielsson, Jelusic, Johansson, and Moelker (2006) found initial confirmation of Bennis's Seven Ages concept in their study of developing military officers from five different NATO countries. Larsson et al. reported, "after a few years, the young officer has developed into the position his or her significant superior role models had at the onset" (Larsson et

al., 2006, p. S78). This newfound confidence resulted in “more formal power” which allowed the developing leader’s “inner world” to become “more secure” resulting in “overt behavior that was flexible, and the professional identity as a military officer was well established” (Larsson et al., 2006, p. S78).

**The Starting Point for Navy Leader Development.** Naval ships demand the best leaders at every level in the organization that the Navy can produce. How to develop good leaders for the Navy Leadership was a hot topic following World War II. Jenkins (1947) in a comprehensive review of leadership studies following World War II noted that Ageton (1944) laid out some principles for naval leaders: simplicity, self-control, tact, honor, adherence to duty, and loyalty. He also noted that no study had the rigor or methodology to serve as the foundation for leader development. Jenkins did pull out several concepts that warranted further investigation. These included notions of leadership being specific to the particular situation, and varying characteristics can be effective. Leaders are capable in the area of technical competence and they tend to have common interests with their followers. No specific personality traits held universally for any group or situation. These concepts help set the target for several schools for the study of the leadership phenomenon.

**Tasks versus Relationships.** Leadership styles have offered alternatives to trait-centered studies. The Ohio State studies under Bass and Stogdill focused on task centered leaders and the Michigan Studies led by Likert among others, focused on relationships. Blake and Mouton (1967) combined the approaches into a leadership/management grid. These studies offered foundations for further exploration of leadership and frameworks from which to develop future leaders. Naval leader

development proceeds along paths to encourage skills in both task completion and personal relationship management. Trust is built from relationships, not just on doing a good job.

**Connections between Leading and Learning.** So much of leader effectiveness depends on learning. Vera and Crossan (2004) proposed a “4I” framework, which, they alleged: “disentangles the processes through which learning occurs in firms” (Vera & Crossan, 2004, p. 224). Learning happens systematically throughout an organization: at the individual, group, and organization levels. As each level learns, it informs the others. Vera and Crossan described how their model “4I” processes of intuiting, interpreting, integrating, and institutionalizing connected all three levels of learning both socially and psychologically. Vera and Crossan stated, “*Intuiting* is a subconscious process that occurs at the level of the individual” (p. 226) and starts the learning by beginning “in a single mind” (p. 226). *Interpreting* gathers the conscious elements of individual learning and shares it among all participants at the group level. *Integrating* follows to transform collective knowledge at the group level and flows to the level of the whole organization. Finally, *institutionalizing* “incorporates that learning across the organization by imbedding it in its, systems, structures, routines, and practices” (p. 226). 4I could become a method to model the shift an organization’s culture. A key will be finding a method to ensure the right lesson is learned in the first place (Crossan & Bedrow, 2003). Admiral Rickover’s four keys for effective leaders were to learn their jobs first. Then they should work hard at their jobs, train their people, and inspect frequently to ensure that the jobs were being done properly. (Rickover, 1981, p. 82). Each of those involved learning and knowing, which then led to leading.

**Preparation.** “Everythingrightnothingwrongthefirsttimeeverytime (ETRNWFTET)” was the mantra preached by the Senior Naval Instructor, Captain John Pearson, at the Senior Officers Ships Materiel Readiness Course (SOSMRC) attended by a generation of prospective Commanding Officers between 1976 and 1996.

“Forehandedness” was one word that summed up the planning, training, attention to detail, and thoughtful follow-up that was necessary to meet the standard. To build that pattern of excellence, leaders must know their authority and its limitations. Those lessons come through experience. On a side note, after a fifteen-year hiatus, the Navy has reinstated the course to rekindle command attention to material readiness and maintaining performance standards.

**Changes in Naval Leadership Development Programs.** Understandings of leadership have continued to evolve as times and demands change. Trongale (2001) explored the changes in Navy leadership development since the end of the Vietnam War using a mixed methods approach. In comparing the experiences and perceptions of Vietnam veterans and post-Vietnam era veterans of changes to the Navy’s approach to leadership development, he concluded that all groups agreed that Navy leadership had changed since Vietnam. Moreover, Vietnam veterans were strong in their opinions that it had changed for the worse. However, post-Vietnam veterans inclined for a more favorable assessment and the positive up check was stronger among SWOs. He noted that the 1991, Tailhook convention in Las Vegas became a “watershed event that sent shockwaves through the Navy hierarchy” (Trongale, 2001, p. 5). Trongale said that for some, “Tailhook represented the quintessential breakdown in Navy leadership, forcing a near decade of zero tolerance for mistakes by anyone at any level” (p. 5). Another major

finding was a lowering rate of faith in senior leadership following the Tailhook investigations which some termed as “witch-hunt” and guilt by association. Those linger today as every Naval Aviator must certify non-attendance at Tailhook ’91 prior to advanced promotion.

**Surface Warfare Officer (SWO) Leader Development.** Leadership development must be ingrained into the lifestyles of future leaders. SWOs (SWOs) have had a career-long leadership and professional development path that includes formal classroom instruction. Blackwell (2008) in his study asked if the Surface Warfare Officer School (SWOS) offered the professional instruction and leadership training required to meet 21st century Department Head requirements. An officer’s success at the Department Head level drives selection for command, and the lessons carried forward propel one’s success in command. Blackwell examined both Army and Navy mid-grade leadership courses to compare the competing services’ levels of leader development and the effectiveness of the Surface Warfare Department Head Leadership Curriculum. Noting a recent shift to assign officers directly aboard ships to complete early modules of the Division Officer training via Computer-based Training (“SWOS-in-a- Box”), he wondered if SWOs were being prepared to meet the expected challenges as future department heads. The survey revealed low marks for Resource Management and Leading Change in both services. Leadership is a fulltime position and the skills, relationships, and abilities should be in development daily. Blackwell suggested improvements to the leadership continuum education at SWOS including offering a leadership module one day a week rather than cramming leadership training into a weeklong concentrated period.

## **Leaders and Managers**

Organizations must construct and refine strategies to develop their professionals into managers who are effective leaders. Officers selected for assignment to command at sea must have demonstrated proven performance and possess uncommon dedication, and a synthesized and integrated mosaic of attributes of the most effective managers and leaders. Future COs must imbue “Ship, shipmates, self” and “Mission first, People always,” as well as emulate the Navy mantra of “Honor, courage, and commitment.” According to Ladkin, Case, Gayá-Wicks, and Kinsella (2007), two major dimensions of leadership exist. One centers on outcomes such as “dreams, missions, strategy, or plans” (p. 195). The second is the dynamic process of people engaging their energies and talents together. The interactive process must cope with the pace of events, the shifting responsibilities, and the various personalities due to the lack of nurturing in the environment. Those requirements for leadership can be accentuated from any level in the organization. “Being a channel of leadership, regardless of rank or function, is the level of enhancement you need” (Ladkin, et al., 2007, p. 198). Future ships' COs exemplify this aspect of leadership throughout their careers.

In a revived article from 1977, Harvard Business Review again explored the leader versus manager paradigm calling on the need to have both. Managers get things done through processes; leaders get things done through people. “The difference between managers and leaders,” Zaleznik said, “lies in the conceptions they hold, deep in their psyches, of chaos and order” (Zaleznik, 2004, p. 76). Zaleznik noted that managers embraced process, sought stability and control, and instinctively tried to resolve problems quickly; “sometimes before they fully understood a problem's significance” (Zaleznik,

2004, p. 77). Leaders, in contrast, handle chaos and lack of structured problems and situations, and recognize they can be willing to delay closure in order to understand the issues more fully. In this way, Zaleznik argued, leaders have much more in common with artists, scientists, and other creative thinkers than they do with managers.

Organizations need managers and leaders to succeed, but developing both requires an environment where creativity and imagination are balanced with a focus on logic and strategic exercises. The Navy must develop officers for Command who can excel at thinking, planning, and finishing.

**Differences in Leaders and Managers.** Leadership is more emotional and spiritual; Management is more about rationality and control (Toor & Ofori, 2008).

Leaders provide direction and effect change. In seeking to discern the difference between leaders and managers, indeed, the distinction between leadership and management, Toor and Ofori (2008) sought to address how organizations could construct a method that combined leadership and management to achieve better results. Building from Hersey and Blanchard's (and others) concepts of leadership, which involve the leader, followers, and the situation, Toor and Ofori, proposed a collective definition of leadership.

“Leadership is a process that involves vision, motivation, and actions of the leader that enables the followers to achieve certain collective goals” (p. 64). Successful COs must exude vision, motivation, and action.

**A Royal Navy Perspective.** Reviewing the Royal Navy's perspective may add insight into new descriptions of the potential challenges. Young and Dulewicz (2008) in their study of similarities and differences between leadership and management and high-performance competencies in the British Royal Navy set out to increase the

“understanding of the complex interplay between personal factors and behavioral characteristics (competencies) relevant to effective leadership and management performance” (p. 17). Their thoughts brought some of the differences between management and leadership into better alignment. Both leadership and management involve “conceptualizing what needs to be done, aligning people and resources, taking an active role, and creating success” (Young & Dulewicz, 2008, p. 18).

Young and Dulewicz found that *Motivation* was the only competency that predicted significantly whether individuals were superior or below average performers (Young & Dulewicz, 2008). Their construct for Motivation (as “energy and drive,” p. 25) strongly correlated with performance, but was also the only characteristic that significantly differentiated the top officers from the bottom. In the Royal Navy, motivation had not been included as a competency assessed directly within the Royal Navy’s appraisal system. For the U.S. Navy, motivation has been the centerpiece for many of the leader development assumptions. Recall the need to aspire to command was a key distinguisher between a front-running naval officer and others. The findings echo the conclusion of Toor and Ofori (2008) that today’s organizations need both leaders and managers.

**Naval Officer Rating vs. Subordinates.** Whether naval officers should be transformational or transactional has led some to view those two models as contrasting ends of the leadership spectrum. Bass and Yammarino (1991), employing quantitative techniques, tested for self-rated leadership behavior (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire), in a representative, random sample of 155 U.S. Navy surface fleet officers compared to a parallel survey of the same dimensions as seen from the perspective of

the officers' senior subordinates. In addition, Navy Fitreps and other records provided performance and promotion data to ascertain appraisals of the officers' success. As might be expected, self-ratings of leadership behavior tended to be inflated in comparison to subordinates' ratings, but the more successful officers were less likely to inflate their self-described leadership behavior. Thus, successful performance was related to congruence between self and others' ratings. The concepts of “know yourself, know your people” to exhibit authentic leadership appeared to be validated.

Navy leadership training tried to excite naval leaders to apply what they learned in school to how they led on the deckplates. Surveys of actual practice demonstrated that interference could prevent translating theory into practice. Conroy (2001) employed quantitative methods to investigate the use of leadership skills following leadership training and assess the support provided by their chains of command. The study attempted to determine what barriers or incentives graduates of the Intermediate Officer Leadership Course faced upon return to their work places. Barriers included resistance to change from subordinates and peers. The majority of respondents reported they were able to use many of the skills, such as leadership models, situational communications, and delegation, presented during the course. All reported problems in employing skills relating to Command Climate.

**Mentors.** Mentors have proven valuable in officer development. Huwe (1999) explored mentor experiences through a quantitative study of retired Navy flag officers. Most flag officers confirmed numerous mentor experiences and the value in helping their careers. However, no “coat-tail” experiences were disclosed (Huwe, 1999). Documented

superior performance of the individual officer and their commands still composed the major factor in selection for Flag rank.

**Leader Experience.** Leader experience and success in first encounters comprise one successful method of growing good leaders. However, Hall, Hannum, and McCarthy (2009) reported their research indicated that experience in a job was not necessarily the best predictor of future performance. Although potentially “counterintuitive” (p. 21), one must consider the unpredictable and rapid changes occurring globally and reflect on the effects of these changes on leadership and management assignments. Hall et al. noted the changes suggest that the future demands of a given job are likely to be different from current demands due to the changing nature of required skill sets. Experience clearly matters, but Hall et al. declare “multiple components of experience” must be considered. To become “more than a capable mariner,” development of future ships’ COs must account for the nature of the work itself (e.g., Division Officer, Department Head, XO) and result in proven performance in positions of increasing levels of challenge and responsibility. Valuable experience gained from the sector in which the person has worked (e.g., ashore or afloat, type of ship, variety of missions) added to the sphere of life in which the experience occurred—professional or personal—grow the future leader’s self-efficacy. The variety of industries in which the person has had experience (e.g. challenging situations, different settings, players, assignments, methods, or results) helps refine a reflective mindset that appreciates the learning that resulted from the experiences (Hall et al., 2009). Naval leader development guidance follows this path.

Diversity of experience was at least as important as depth of experience in predicting an executive’s future success (Hall, Hannum, & McCarthy, 2009). Hall et al.

found experiences were extremely valuable factors in executive-level learning and development by forcing people to face new challenges such as working with increasingly diverse groups. These experiences enabled executives to develop broader views of the world. According to Hall et al., in the current business and political environment that is what the U.S. Army calls VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous); making the choice for the future leader among promising candidates is at best a bet on the future. Gauging an individual's potential to learn from experiences and their ability to apply that learning in different contexts appropriately may be more significant than any specific experience. Patterns of sustained superior performance are a key precursor for selection to command at sea. The self-awareness factor of "Learning how one learns" adds to one's adaptability and future value. Starting right, and excelling from the beginning, is one key.

**Military Examples of Starting Right.** Exactly how military leaders are developed has been investigated by several scholars. Larsson, Bartone, Bos-Bakx, Danielsson, Jelusic, Johansson, and Moelker (2006) addressed the question of what factors influenced the development of good leaders in the military, and sought to "clarify what the natural developmental process itself might entail" (Larsson et al., 2006, p. S71). Larsson et al. identified two main determinants of these processes: the everyday social interaction between the young officer and his or her significant others, especially observing role models and getting feedback; and taking part in real-world military missions. Capitalizing on both factors "strongly contributes to a confirmation of the officer's professional identity" (Larsson et al., 2006, p. S74). Larsson et al.'s findings support Day, Mang, Richter, and Roberts' (2001) argument that leader development

involves not just individual-level considerations; but “entails an interaction of the individual with the organizational environment” (Larsson et al., 2006, p. S79).

Confidently, Larsson et al. concluded their data provided a “bridge [to] what Day described as the individual–human capital concept of leader development and the more relational–social capital concept of leadership development” (Larsson et al., 2006, p. S79).

**Navy Examples of Missing the Mark.** Leader development across the Navy has not been fully aligned or effective. As clearly evidenced in survey data collected by the Naval War College’s Stockdale Group, the two most important factors in learning naval leadership are experience and observation of others (Hayes, 2008). Hayes, a Naval aviator, bemoaned the Navy’s lack of leadership development and training. Not many SWOs would agree with his charge “most of the past century the Navy has struggled to define formally and institutionalize its development process for naval leaders” (p. 77). They would, however, agree that the Navy’s greatest challenge, which was one of Admiral Mullen’s enduring top three priorities in his tenure as CNO, is to “cultivate leaders prepared to meet the challenges inherent in the 21st century security environment” (p. 77). Hayes contended that leadership development was “inextricably wed to training and education” (p. 78). He called for the Navy to integrate leader and leadership development into the professional military education (PME) curriculum rather than allow it to languish on its own. Further, he enjoined, “the Navy must focus on intra-service officer development before it can fully realize effective operational leadership in an inter-service joint operating environment” (Hayes, 2008, p. 79). (Now he said this with naval officers serving in six of the top 12 positions across DOD and Joint

commands.) He joined the chorus in expressing the need to reform the Navy's processes into a systematic "assessment, career management, and advancement selection criteria, initiative." He warned that continued supremacy of naval leadership may "fall out of favor as the helm is passed to the next cohort of Navy leaders" (Hayes, 2008, p. 78).

He lamented that only the "Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) had a mature and prescribed strategic leader development program" (Hayes, 2008, p. 79). With no comparable course or content at the Naval War College or anywhere else in the Navy's PME continuum, the future Navy may suffer by lack of participation at the highest levels. Hayes noted the "subtle difference between leadership education and educating leaders" (p. 87). Seen as complementary, but not mutually inclusive, leadership education is a subordinate element of leadership development. "Leadership education is instruction in leadership theory, concepts, and models of action" (Hayes, 2008, p. 87). While "Educating leaders... includes everything else" (p. 87). Hayes charged: "A fundamental and revealing difference between the Navy's leadership development system and that of the Army, Air Force, and Marines is the relative cultural emphasis on integrated leadership and professional military education. The Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force have made PME and leadership education integral parts of their career tracks" (Hayes, 2008, p. 91).

Despite CNO-directed "mandatory attendance" in the Navy's leadership training courses, the Center for Naval Leadership struggles to fill its seats, and the number of line officers attending according to Hayes "is abysmally low—though the curriculum has been cut in half, in a patent attempt to boost attendance" (Hayes, 2008, p. 93). Hayes (2008) warned that the Navy must achieve competence in developing fully qualified

naval leaders before it can realize its ambition to create joint leaders. Hayes, drawing from Hagerott (2008), thought the focus on machines and technology, rather than on Sailors, caused this deficiency. At the tactical level, Air Force and Navy officers are concerned almost exclusively on their machines; while “Marine and Army officers are focused on leadership—the fundamental expectation is that every officer is a leader of soldiers or Marines” (p. 91). In fact, Hayes reported that Professor Richard Suttie of the Naval War College, discussed the long term neglect of leadership education adding that the Navy was the beneficiary of nearly a hundred reviews of leader development since 1919, and 80 percent of their recommendations for corrective action have been the same. The consistencies of these findings and the recurring need for such reviews, each followed by a brief eruption of action, marked by shifts in the leadership training program, indicate a “doctrinal failure of the Navy’s system” (p. 95).

Yet, Hayes (2008) concluded the leadership crisis in the Navy existed “not at the operational level, but at the tactical level, and was a consequence of a misaligned, fragmented, and marginalized system of officer professional development” (p. 105). Based on recent failures of Navy COs in high profile leadership positions, he has a case. How many of these failures in Command could have been prevented by an aligned and fully supported leader development track?

Light (2012) stated that misconduct was “more likely than it once was to be detected, more harmful to the Navy’s mission, and more likely to make headlines when it involves a CO” (Light, 2012, p. 144). Light (2012) warned that the “zero-defect mentality” could result in behavioral problems in junior officers that seniors, reluctant to enforce accountability for things they know they got away with, either ignore or even

cover up. In doing so, Commanders become guilty of “reducing the opportunity for correction, mentoring, development, and instruction in ethical standards” (p. 144). To stem the tide of CO personal misconduct, Light recommended that the Navy needed to adjust priorities in “policy, training, and personnel processes” (p. 137).

### **Power, Judgment, Truth, and Recovery**

Power was termed the “great motivator” by McClelland and Burnham (1977, p. 1). Managing that power when in Command is challenging and a few succumb. Resilience has been a key attribute found in exceptional leaders. Hall, Hannum, and McCarthy (2009) noted the importance of monitoring a leader’s future value by asking, “whether those who have had power abused that power, and whether those who have made judgments made informed and just judgments” (Hall et al., 2009, p. 22). Further, were they reflective and responsible: “Did those who made mistakes admit them and bounce back? Is there concrete evidence that they were able to learn from their experiences—their successes as well as their failures?” (Hall et al., p. 22). Moreover, in making changes, “Did those who put forth policies speak the truth or just create fog?” (Hall et al., 2009, p. 22). In addition, in choosing future leaders, are those who choose properly equipped and authorized to make the choice? Admiral John C. Harvey likes to say, “Choices not circumstances power our destiny” (Harvey, 2011, 16 February).

**Peer Coaching.** Much of today’s work focuses on learning. Parker, Hall, and Kram (2008) noted the potential power of peer coaching to accelerate career learning. Parker et al. concluded that peer-coaching works best for a person when it followed a three-step process of building the developmental relationship, creating success in development, and internalizing the learning tactic by applying the peer-coaching process

in future relationships (Parker et al., 2008, p. 497). According to Parker et al., career learning for leaders has evolved from a one-time education credential to an ongoing life-long process. Since all are involved in mission attainment, tapping in to each other's unique resources can enable all parties to learn and build the organization's productivity. Likewise, in terms of leadership learning, when peers can share through direct and honest feedback and serve to hold each other accountable, colleagues are "likely to keep leadership development as a priority, equal in importance to technical knowledge acquisition" (Parker et al., 2008, p. 500). Knowledge is a key to productivity; relationships are the keys to leadership.

**Mentoring.** Peer coaching experiences will aid one in serving as a mentor as the need to develop the next generation of leaders becomes apparent. Succession and the long-term health of the organization should become more important aspects of command excellence. Harper (2010) reported on the experiences of helping others excel and gaining feedback and insights. Listening actively and staying open to what the other person really means help break down barriers to developing the leader of the future and a team player. The Navy's expectation of "Ship, shipmate, self" mindset for leaders can transform individuals into servants. In equipping those future leaders, Wisecup (2010) noted that the Navy leaders "should be thinking continually about what the people who have to make the tough decisions for the Navy of the future will need to do business" (Wisecup, 2010, p. 12). Wisecup noted the Navy should encourage innovation, demand effective problem solving and execution, and continually explore and record the results of its experiments to share for the next generation.

**Networks.** The latest rage in business-to-business connections includes the concept of “networks.” Ghosh, Haynes, and Kram (2010) endorsed the concept of developmental networks based on peer coaching, multiple mentors, and varying experiences to help leaders develop through the levels of an organization. These levels, termed: “individual, interpersonal, institutional, and inter-individual stages” (Ghosh, et al., 2010, p. 1) built on Kegan’s (1980) stage theory of confirmation, contradiction, and continuity. “A network of mentors and developers situated in interpersonal, institutional, and inter-individual stages can ensure the confirmation, contradiction, and continuity that an interpersonal stage adult leader needs to transition to the next developmental stage” (Ghosh, et al., 2010, p. 2). Leaders following this path are evolving into adults who can “detach themselves from their deeply held beliefs and reflect on those beliefs with a critical eye” (see Frew, 2009). This transitional stage produces a sense of uncertainty as these adult leaders are trying to accommodate multiple perspectives and ideologies in their mental frame, and at times, those differing perspectives and ideologies may be conflicting.

Through networks, developing leaders gain maturity and have the listening ear (and correcting voices) of those who comprehend what it was like in the caldron. Understanding and acceptance of multiple ideologies coupled with the emerging ability to consider deeply held ideas as objects to reflect on helps the adult leaders in this transitional stage to slowly overcome the limitations of transformational leadership that they faced in the institutional stage. Moreover, as these leaders develop a deeper understanding of multiple perspectives, all can be perceived to grow more appreciative of

diversity in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, and culture and become more capable of relating to, and empowering their followers with diverse backgrounds (Frew, 2009).

### **Learning Models**

Learning how one learns is important to leader development. Kegan (1980) introduced the concept of meaning making as relationships develop across different perspectives. Being sensitive to other persons' situations and listening closely helps one comprehend the other's perspective without concluding mistakenly that an observer knows based on one's own background and interests. The other person's point of view is probably very different from the observer's. Schein (1996) affirmed that organizations have a difficult time leaning from their experiences. Schein, along with Argyris, McGregor, Likert, Lewin, and many others, related that managers could generate effective leading and learning by treating people as adults. By involving them appropriately in their assigned tasks, and establishing conditions so employees could obtain good feedback, managers enable their work force members to become responsible for monitoring their own performance. Schein declared that most organizations contain three different major occupational cultures that do not really understand each other very well and that often work at cross-purposes. He named the competing cultures as those of engineers, CEO's, and the operators. He said:

The key to organizational learning may be in helping executives, operators, and engineers learn how to learn, how to analyze their own cultures, and how to evolve those cultures around their strengths. These communities may learn in different ways, and we will have to develop appropriate learning tools for each community. (Schein, 1996, p. 18)

Tailoring leadership education is exactly the approach the Navy has employed in developing future leaders. Deciding just what to tailor and improving how to present it

still pose the main challenges in leader development. The Surface Warfare Officer School Department Head course has implemented the beginning of a 360-degree feedback program to aid future officer leader development.

Gambrell, Matkin, and Burbach (2011) explored how to cultivate leaders using higher orders of adult development and critical thinking. In filling a gap that “appears to be a call for more conscious awareness of leaders” (Gambrell, et al., 2011, p. 309), their research concentrated on showing that constructive development and higher order thinking were “essential and, closely related, to more effective leadership” (Gambrell et al., 2011, p. 309). Building on Kegan’s concept of constructive development, Gambrell, et al. argued that higher order thinking as well as cultivating self-development led to better concepts of leadership found in the latest models of Servant leadership, Transformational leadership, Spiritual leadership, and Authentic leadership.

### **Best Practices in Leader Development Programs**

The best leadership programs use a variety of methods, combining core classroom segments with online support and e-learning, action learning projects, and experiential learning to create the desired and demonstrable leadership development outcomes. Ray (2010) reported the 2009 ASTD-Booz Allen Hamilton Strategic and Tactical Approaches to Executive Development Study looked at approaches to executive development, finding that classroom-based learning is used to a high or very high degree 65 percent of the time, followed closely by experiential learning at 53 percent. Other common elements of top development programs include coaching, action learning, and 360-degree feedback. Both action learning and experiential learning appeal to seasoned adult learners; since they place the learner at the center, and require active engagement to be effective. While

similar in terms of applying theory to real life, an action learning project usually centers on a company, or industry, specific challenge and builds on expertise. Whereas experiential learning requires that the learner step into uncharted territory, develop and implement solutions, then reflect post-experience, and make the connections back to the workplace.

**Discerning the Best.** Leadership is a personal calling, thus organizations employ many different leader development plans. The most popular leader development programs consist of developmental relationships, individual development plans, individual/group reflection, networking with senior executives, action learning, 360-degree feedback, developmental assessments, instruments/assessments, coaching, and service learning (Bernthal & Wellins, 2006). Allen, Hartman, Conklin, and Smith (2007) explored 25 commonly used leader development approaches. Noting that little agreement existed on the best sources of learning, Allen et al. surveyed practitioners for their perspectives on sources of learning by indicating those that would most likely be used, would be cost effective, would provide the greatest learning for participants, would yield participant satisfaction, and were the most useful approaches (Allen et al., 2007). Organizations excel when retaining those who best understand the business and its missions. Allen et al. discovered that only 50 percent of leaders were satisfied with their leader development programs. Their results affirmed that organizations should offer a variety of learning experiences that members could employ to construct personal leadership development programs for themselves over the service of their careers. In so doing, organizations afford individuals the opportunity to choose their own path to develop, thus helping the organization identify those truly motivated to lead.

**Leader Development: Continuous and Organizationally Aligned.** To establish long-term continuity, leader development must be continuous and aligned. Day and O'Connor (2006) reported on four different leadership models: the strong individual, the hierarchy, the pipeline, and collective practices. Often, those types exist among the top leadership group in any organization. The ultimate goal is to align their strengths to facilitate organization excellence and mission accomplishment. Day (2000) distinguished between leader development and manager development. Manager education and training focuses on improving knowledge, skills, and abilities, to enhance task performance and apply proven solutions to known problems. In contrast, a leadership development approach focused on “building capacity in anticipation of unforeseen challenges” (Day, 2000, p. 582). He distinguished between leader development as a process of increasing Human capital, versus the concept of leadership development as a process of building Social capital. Day reviewed opportunities for advanced understanding of the effectiveness of the following popular development practices: 360-degree feedback, executive coaching, mentoring, networking, and job assignments. In general, Day (2000) concluded all practices required more comprehensive definitions, investigations, and analysis. Much leadership research reported since 2000 has followed those paths.

### **Compton’s Key Framework for Developing High Reliability Leaders**

To sustain any high performing organization a leader development program and succession strategy must be in place and sustained with incorporating advances in technology, changes in the social cultural, or situations in response to threats or opportunities. Compton (2008) asked, “How do individuals develop to be effective leaders in high reliability organizations?” (Compton, 2008, p. 6). Compton presented an

excellent summary of the challenge of developing leaders for HROs. After not finding an agreed upon definition for High Reliability Organizations (HRO), Compton surfaced three common themes for concluding that an organization was an HRO:

- It actively manages complex, demanding technologies;
- Its systems have significant potential for catastrophic accidents; and
- The organization can achieve exemplary performance in both safety and reliability over a long period. (Compton, 2008, p. 24)

Navy ships reflect characteristics of the HRO so the outputs of his study add value to the development of officers for Command selection and assignment. His work served as a benchmark for this review. Weaving leadership theories with relevant learning theories including adult learning concepts, into executive leader development activities through education, training, and relationships, Compton offered suggestions for how potential leaders can maximize the return on investment of their opportunities to enhance their leadership practices. “Future executives never stopped learning, stretching, growing, breaking new ground, observing, reflecting, seeking feedback, and making the most of their learning opportunities” (Compton, 2008, p. 67-68). In filling a research gap, he developed a conceptual model to evaluate “Executive Leader Development in HROs” (p. 102).

Compton (2008) employed a qualitative interpretivist approach in an effort to understand the social reality of HRO executive leaders. Compton’s proposed a roadmap for HRO executive development began with top executive commitment to leader development. The process included systematic evaluation, selection, and progress of organization leaders. Each leader must have an individualized development plan and

opportunities for assignments across a variety of challenges as one learns and advances through the organization. Future leaders should have career long developmental coaching and mentoring.

Compton (2008) laid the responsibilities for development squarely on the future leaders themselves. Aspiring leaders must accept responsibility for their own development. One can take the first step toward senior level leadership by preparing a self-directed leader development plan including seeking challenging work assignments and experiences. In admonishing future leaders who sometimes are reluctant to ask for help, Compton encouraged developing leaders to seek coaching and mentoring. Moreover, he enjoined them to seek training, education, and development; and importantly, to read.

The Navy is a meritocracy and performance keys future assignments and promotions. Navy leader development, at least in the Surface Navy for much of the period in question, included many of these best practices. Admiral James Winnefeld (2005) stressed the importance of performance in every job. Building a record of performance in jobs of ever-increasing challenges enables one to get one of the “challenging” jobs. Naval leader development for command at sea now incorporates frameworks for advancement and assignments to experiential learning positions, senior officer coaching, and professional education and training.

**Decision Making Success.** Four practical steps can help in successful decision-making: have a system, use it, follow-through, and follow-up. To have a system for decision-making, Drucker’s (1967) framework represented a good start. Cowan (1991) observed to match the system to one’s personal style and temperament. Hammond,

Keeney, and Raiffa (1998) said to stay aware and account for personal weak tendencies to make gut calls from lack of awareness. In using the system, leaders should expect tensions and work through them. They must learn how to ask questions and seek more information, but must phrase the right questions in the right way. As leaders plan the follow through, one good line of questions to pursue includes “What are we going to do and how are we going to get it done?” Gen. Patton was reported to have said, “A good plan violently executed today is better than a perfect plan on Monday.” Once the decision is made, leaders must actively follow-up and go look. COs just giving the order to “Make it so” as we heard Captain Kirk of the Starship Enterprise direct his crew, often assumes that the job can be completed without any more leadership effort. When one has the “dot,” that person must see it through. Most plans fail in the execution phase, not the planning phase (Bossidy & Charan, 2002).

**Communicating and Visioning.** Good decisions are on target and can be communicated easily. Properly scoped, relevant, and valid decisions lead to effective action. Leaders must employ the best of “politics” to share the vision to energize the base and continue with follow through and follow-up to set the organization and system up for the next decision cycle. Finally, good leaders are able to project a vision, (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005, p. 173).

**Gaining Credibility.** Credibility results from leaders being believed and trusted by their followers. Credibility as a leader “depends vitally on perceived integrity: keeping one’s word, fulfilling one’s promises, not playing favorites, and not taking advantage of one’s situation” (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005, p. 173). Authenticity and transparency also imply credibility for the leader. Hoffman (2008) stated: “Credible

leadership is at the heart of defining an effective leader in America” (p. 1). She traced the presence of credibility in leadership theory in every decade since 1900 and its position in leadership studies. Hoffman discovered that credibility was not always in the topmost listed aspects of leadership. After several decades of neglect in the 1940s, 50s, and leading into the 60s, credibility began to be recognized in developments of Greenleaf’s Servant Leadership (1967) and later in Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) models. Hoffman related that trustworthiness and transparency became aspects of credibility in later studies such as Goleman (1995).

**State of Mind.** Many H.R. and O.D. consulting firms champion behavioral competency models. Much of the Leadership and Management Education and Training (LMET) work developed by McBer Associates and applied by the Navy fit these competency-based paradigms. Polsfuss and Ardichvili (2009) presented another way to look at leadership. Polsfuss and Ardichvili argued that cognitive competency models emerged due to the lack of long-term sustainability of results of behavioral-based leadership development. Models that emphasized modification of mental practices such as positive thinking, cognitive reprogramming and affirmations, and values and meaning clarification were designed to improve cognitive ability that controlled or complemented behavioral competencies. Polsfuss and Ardichvili added that a leader’s state of mind formed the driving factor for leader competence. Their findings parallel the concepts of motivation as an intrinsic part of leader behavior and effectiveness. These emotional competency models include what has become known as “emotional intelligence or *EQ*” (Goleman, 2004). “Emotional competence is a powerful factor in enhancing behavioral

competencies, especially with regard to interpersonal relations” (Polsfuss & Ardichvili, 2009, p. 27).

**Leader’s Identity: Parallels with Other Service Organizations.** The challenges faced by leaders at community colleges have many parallels with those faced by Navy ship COs. Anderson, Lujan, and Hegeman (2009) in a study based on the challenges at community colleges whose age ranges parallel most ship’s complements, noted the importance of a professional and institutional ethical identity. Andersen et al. stated that community college stakeholders were trying to balance a variety of issues. These included changing student and employee demographics, pedagogical and curricular shifts, advances in technology, aging physical facilities, increased competition, multiple and conflicting opportunities, reliance on partnerships, mission drift, diminishing budgets, increased scrutiny and calls for accountability, and all the other realities of today’s community college world. Those challenges mirror many of the challenges faced by the Navy and many ship Captains today. In striving to meet the challenges, community college professionals find themselves trying to fulfill their social contract, provide good stewardship of the resources entrusted to them, and meet public expectations within that ethical framework. At the same time, community colleges are dealing with competing internal values and beliefs in a complex culture comprised of a variety of individuals and subgroups. Looking at these concerns may help one examine the Navy and ship’s COs for similar beliefs.

### **Competency Models**

Competency models have a role, but need to keep up with the times. Conger and Ready (2004) writing in *Leader to Leader* noted that in spite of the best companies

employing competency frameworks to develop their leadership talent, careful attention must be directed to making sure the current leadership development strategy is designed to address tomorrow's business model, not yesterday's. Competency models offer the "Three C's" (p. 43): clarity, consistency, and connectivity; yet as Conger and Ready point out, also come with limitations. Leadership models tended to be complicated, conceptual, and assembled to mirror the existing understanding of realities (Conger & Ready, 2004). They warned current leaders responsible for their companies' futures not to fall into the trap of identifying potential leaders who are simple clones of themselves. As business strategies change, so will an organization's leadership development requirements (Conger & Ready, 2004, p. 47). Real leaders possess an integrated capability to model many competencies, and adjust as required when the situation demands. This is the key to adaptability.

### **Summary of "Path to Command"**

Officers who will ascend to command will serve in several standard assignments as Division officers, department heads, and ashore. Each assignment offers future COs opportunities to learn their responsibilities, observe different leaders and the challenges, and understand many of the challenges of leadership and vicariously learn what they might expect if selected for command. "Sustained, superior performance" (Winnefeld, 2005) across the board is what drives selection.

### **Assessing Command Success**

Discovering how leaders, especially ships' COs, "know they are winning" is a key target for this study. Leaders who lead well have learned how to assess their

effectiveness. Learning what good performance is and being able to reflect on each day's achievements helps officers develop the confidence and invigorates their drive for selection to command. An officer's self-efficacy grows as performance improves to meet and exceed standards.

### **Command Effectiveness: Achieving Excellence**

Command effectiveness is tied to leader performance. Just how should the system judge a leader's results? Day and Lord (1988) declared executive leadership required a broader foundation than just styles, traits, relationships, and tasks. They suggested a methodology to account for longer-term effects using historical analyses and sought different dependent variables for outcomes of demonstrated leader effectiveness. Following much in the pattern of Porter's Five Forces (Porter, 2008), their model analyzes leader effectiveness across three overarching themes. How well did the leader (a) respond to the influence of external environments, (b) adapt to external environments, and (c) exert internal influence and adaptation. For each of these, a matching target and objective, was coupled to a tactic labeled as "direct" or "indirect" (p. 461).

Conger and Ready (2004) addressed their first question as whether one could develop accurate contingency models of leadership that reflected today's complex world of managers. Then, Conger and Ready said the next question was finding if a significant number of managers and executives possessed a sufficient versatility in their behavioral repertoires to shift their leadership styles under changing circumstances. This capability would require that individuals be able first to recognize that a new situation demands a shift in their style, and possess the sophistication to understand which leadership approach would be more appropriate to the particular situation. The next step is equally

difficult—adapting their behavior to a new leadership approach. Conger and Ready said they “might call this a 'chameleon leadership' capability” (Conger & Ready, 2004, p. 138-139). They left unanswered those sets of questions.

Leadership Lists: NAVLEAD Command Excellence. Since the 1950s, the Navy has maintained lists of competencies found in excellent commands. These lists are both official and unofficial and have been arranged chronologically in Appendix E, Commanding Officer Qualities. Admiral R. L. Connolly, (1954) retiring president of the Naval War College listed 15. World War II hero and former CNO, Admiral Arleigh Burke in a 1972 address on “The Art of Command” at the Naval War College focused on accountability and advised those in attendance, not to forget the fundamentals of command in spite of social pressures and changing attitudes. Stockdale (1995) reflected on his thoughts on leadership. Foley (1984) explored the Navy’s Competencies from Command Excellence and listed 16 working definitions. Sheppard (1996), Stavridis (2008) and Abrashoff (2002) wrote accounts of their experiences in command. Wray (2012) compiled a list of lists in his work *Saltwater Leadership*. However, command is more than just executing lists or having the right attributes. Those are important, but success depends on what happened under the commander’s watch. Its bottom line is performance.

### **Execution is Key to Performance**

Sustained superior performance is the key to selection for command. Execution is the key to performance. Plans can be made on the fly, but what gets done and how well, and what we do next, depend on the ability to execute (Bossidy & Charan, 2002). Planning can be an important factor, but failing to execute dooms most strategies.

Execution demands discipline in terms of organization, direction, reports, and follow-up. Bossidy and Charan stated “Execution is a systematic process of rigorously discussing how’s and what’s, questioning, tenaciously following through, and ensuring accountability” (p.22). In developing the ability to execute, Bossidy and Charan listed three processes vital for success: picking other leaders, setting strategic direction, and conducting operations. Good execution depends on an organization’s ability to get the right people in right places. Bossidy and Charan’s (2002, p. 57) seven essential behaviors for leaders included:

1. Know your people and your business.
2. Insist on realism.
3. Set clear goals and priorities.
4. Follow through.
5. Reward the doers.
6. Expand all your people’s capabilities.
7. Know yourself (authenticity, self-awareness, self-mastery, humility).

For creating the framework to set strategic direction and operationalize culture change, they recommended programs that linked rewards to performance, aligned relationships, practices and beliefs, and maintained “robust dialogue” (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 105). Moreover, leaders must “model the behavior” (they “really want” (p. 107). Hurdles to identifying those people include lack of knowledge, both the leaders’ and individuals, as well as corporately; a lack of courage to cull out slackers early, and most egregious, a lack of personal commitment from the top. Bossidy and Charan noted the best leader material for future development included persons who were energizers. They

already could be “decisive on tough issues, get things done through others, and follow through well” (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 85). In conducting operations, Bossidy and Charan noted it was important to validate assumptions; employing techniques such as SWOT or taking stock using Michael Porter’s (Porter, 2008) five forces, help them answer: Can we execute? What are the milestones? Are short term and long term balanced? The goal is achieving “organizational effectiveness.” But, just what does “organizational effectiveness” mean for a Navy ship?

### **Five Components of Organization Effectiveness:**

From the generic business perspective as related by Bossidy and Charan, (2002), organizational effectiveness has five components: people, motivation, management, strategy, and a monitoring system. Having talented personnel is the first component of organizational effectiveness. On a ship, a new commanding officer can expect to have a group of officers and crew who have special talents that must be discovered and unlocked. To unleash that talent calls for the ability to develop motivated personnel: people who are willing to perform to the limits of their ability and challenge themselves. Other things being equal, a motivated team will outperform a demoralized team (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 178). A talented management team must be assembled among the triumvirate CO-XO-CMC (Abrashoff, 2002; Bossidy & Charan, 2002; Stavridis & Girrier, 2010; Stavridis, 2008) and an impetus to excel must flow through the other key leaders of the ship in the wardroom, in the CPO mess, and among the crew (Sheppard, 1996). An effective strategy for outperforming the competition when combined with talented people leads to victory in battle for ships at sea in war; or besting the pack among one’s fellow destroyer/ combatant ship COs in peacetime (Abrashoff, 2002,

Sheppard, 1996; Stavridis, 2008). The final component of organizational effectiveness is a “set of monitoring systems that will allow senior leadership to keep track of the talent level and motivation of the staff, the performance of the management group, and the effectiveness of the business strategy” (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 178). Ship COs are to be focused on quality in every operation. As credible caretakers of their mighty ships and the environment, they must execute programs to prevent pollution, conserve resources, and build respect. Credibility leads to trust. Trust is the glue for effective command.

### **Succession Strategy**

Three key indicators of Command success are contained in the sustained success of the ship, the continued career opportunities for the CO, and the contribution made to the future of Navy through the development of each individual (Murphy, 2006). On the average, about one third of the crew turns over every year. Command tours are short, approximately two years or so. Other shipboard assignments have even shorter rotational timeframes. Often, the persons who have the longest time on board are first or second class petty officers who reported years ago as seamen and have earned both promotion and trust through good performance and experience. The system demands continuous development of future executives and leaders, as well as timing for replacements of vital positions (Abrashoff, 2002; Hall, 1986). Most often, the existing crew serves as the source for enlisted fills up to First Class Petty Officers. Chiefs and Officers on the other hand, achieve qualifications and gain experience that transfer off when the chiefs and officers depart enroute to new assignments. Sustaining the level of experienced and qualified personnel is a challenge all COs must meet.

Hall (1986) noted the dilemmas linking succession planning to individual executive learning. He identified two types of learning that leaders must develop: task skills and people skills. Task skills include improving one's knowledge, skills, and abilities deemed necessary to perform higher-level jobs effectively. Hall called the other learning challenge as the mastery of the socio-emotional tasks associated with the person's stage in life. Hall pointed out that most of the succession literature articles ignored that facet of learning. He charged the field with "completely overlooking the fact that executives are adults who have to 'grow up' just like any other human being" (Hall, 1986, p. 245). These two types of learning were related to the four dimensions of career growth and effectiveness: performance, adaptability, attitudes, and identity (Hall, 1986). Performance and adaptability referred to facets of task mastery, while attitudes and identity deal with facets of socio-emotional mastery. All are important in the development of Navy leaders, and especially, those who will become ships' COs.

### **Implications for Future Command Transitions**

Today's managers must successfully adapt to changing demands and situations, manage multiple lateral relationships, set and implement agendas, and cope with stress and uncertainty. Dragoni, Tesluk, Russell, and Oh (2009) discussed understanding managerial development through integrating developmental assignments, learning orientation, and access to developmental opportunities in predicting managerial competencies. They addressed a key theoretical concern of leadership development theorists who called for greater understanding of how developmental assignments translated into actual behavior-based "end-state" outcomes such as managerial competencies. First, Dragoni, et al. developed and tested a model linking highly

developmental job assignments to managerial end-state competencies. They defined the developmental quality of a managerial job assignment as the degree to which it contained “developmental dimensions that challenge and potentially broaden a manager’s current capabilities” (Dragoni et al., 2009, p. 732). They demonstrated the importance of the developmental quality of job assignments by showing that managers in developmental assignments achieve higher levels of managerial competencies. Additionally, they showed that managers with higher levels of a learning goal orientation were more likely to have been in developmental assignments when their managers recognized their “high potential to assume challenging assignments” (Dragoni, et al., p. 734). Naval officers strive to achieve those words in their early Fitness reports from their Commanders (Winnefeld, 2005).

Developmental assignments allowed some managers to gain more than others due to the stronger relationship between the developmental quality of an assignment and the competence for those with strong learning goal orientations (Dragoni et al. 2009). Dragoni et al.’s results isolated the impact of the developmental quality of managerial assignments to show that an assignment rich in developmental dimensions— not just *time* spent in a particular assignment or in a particular company—was what enhanced managerial competencies. Their results advanced understanding of career progressions of managers with stronger learning goal orientations. Those who were recognized for their greater desire to know gained assignments that were more instrumental in aiding them in achieving their career goals (Dragoni et al., 2009). They concluded that learning goal orientation was important for being in a developmental assignment and for strengthening the positive relationship between the developmental dimensions of

managerial assignments and managerial competencies. Those who desire to know, and are recognized, earn greater opportunities to lead.

### **Competence vs. Governance**

Studying how leaders can bring about the concept of trust uncovered two methods: being competent and finding a proper method to monitor progress. In a business oriented parallel, Makadok (2003) discussed the importance of both competence and governance as the keys for successful balancing needs of the business with needs of individuals. His concept proposed that doing the right things and knowing the right things to do would lead to making the whole greater than the sum of its parts. Good COs seek both knowing and doing those right things. The notion of competence and governance can be applied to how ships run at sea. The ship and the CO are governed by a set of rules, both written and unwritten, which yield the foundation for exercising command. Success derives from how well the CO and the ship's crew exercise their competencies in doing all that is expected from the ship for its assigned missions. Fleet instructions are parallel to "oversight" and the CO's ability to prioritize expectations sets the "governance" for the demanded level of performance as competencies. But just rules are not enough. In judging the value of rules, Admiral Rickover was once quoted, "More than ambition, more than ability, it is rules that limit contribution; rules are the lowest common denominator of human behavior. They are a substitute for rational thought." Taylor in Sims and Quatro (2005) stated that a ship's captain's character demands must be founded on discipline, courage, and commitment. The Navy espouses these results and actions as "Honor, courage, and commitment."

### **Another Challenge to Excellence: Who Desires to Command?**

This mindset of “Honor, Courage, and Commitment” sets up a dilemma for most officers as they consider staying to compete for the challenge of command. Must they accept less than the best from themselves when their seniors do not appear to demand it? Taylor (in Sims & Quatro, 2005) noted that the demand for intelligent, disciplined, well-trained young men and women who have had great leadership experience” (p. 190) can be met by former officers from military service. This pull requires a supplemental set of leadership skills and behavior for those who would command in today’s military. Taylor noted that in addition to honor, courage, commitment, and integrity, selfless service, and character, required traits for the 21st century would include enhanced cognitive skills, an ability to deal with ambiguity, intellectual flexibility, self-awareness, and a better understanding of organizational behavior and their command climate. Commanders who succeed at those roles will enable the whole unit to become more cohesive and establish the strength to face any adversity. He focused on enhancing the “Warrior Spirit” described as the “can do” at all costs spirit that is the foundation for serving in the Armed Forces by supplementing new skills of creativity, embracing change, agility, and self-awareness. Taylor declared that the environment has changed: the people, the weapons, and the causes. Taylor also noted the electronic and technological world has challenged leaders to begin to strive for a better understanding of the role of the media in military operations. In the past, with letters and news serviced by surface mail and signals sent by *flaghoists*, ship COs had nearly complete control of information within the lifelines. Now the challenges are different.

Naval officers, even though well prepared, well-schooled, and specially selected, still fail in command. Since 2001, of 703 Navy cruiser-destroyer-frigate (CRUDES or “combatant”) COs, 47 have failed to complete successful command. Chatfield pointed out that in these change of command episodes “The Band Didn’t Play” (Chatfield, 2009, p.1). Command failure occurs due to character defects regarding ethical issues or, misbehavior, special incidents, or just plain bad luck or bad timing over a series of small distractions. In many of these cases, the term “Loss of confidence” in the ability to command appears among the published reasons (Smith & Campbell, 2010).

### **Pressures on New Leaders**

An emerging group of derailment cases is attracting attention: young high-potential executives and managers. Many COs will also go through crucibles or travails as their command tour progresses toward success or descends into failure. Personal shortcomings often set the stage for later results that fail to meet expectations. Capretta, Clark, and Dai (2008) noted, “Due to the changing demographics in organizations as more and more Baby Boomers retire, younger high-potential managers are being promoted sooner than usual, assuming roles of greater responsibility years earlier than was the case with their predecessors” (p. 48). These leaders are then “failing in these bigger jobs as a result of lack of experience and maturity, coupled with the generally more complex and global business and people issues today’s leaders must address” (Capretta et al., 2008, p. 48).

**Ethics, Misbehavior, Character Defects.** COs must be careful to avoid problems in character. Relationships, covenants, even contracts, depend on trust as the bond that links expectations and performance. The relationships COs maintain must be

ethical. Moral deterioration becomes visible as inauthentic behavior via deliberate withdrawal, accompanied by the development of an ability to avoid making decisions, or avoidance of responsibility. Moral deterioration entails both frustrations/ and indecisiveness and, according to Barnard (1962), diminishes a leader's general sense of responsibility that often manifests as a tendency "to let decisions hinge on chance, external or irrelevant determinants, or incidental pressures" (Barnard, 1962, p. 271).

Caldwell (2009) in discussing ethical implications for leaders and organizations offered insights about the nature of identity and self-awareness, by examining how self-deception can create barriers to self-awareness and conflict with one's identity. In validating the importance of ongoing ethical self-assessment, he identified five ethical duties owed to the self, which enabled individuals to deal more productively with themselves, with others, and with the world around them. Leaders have a duty to understand how vulnerable they can be when they are unwilling or unable to address incongruity in their lives. Leaders must examine their core beliefs and live up to them. Leaders have the responsibility to recognize the stresses that cause them to become vulnerable to self-deception, acknowledge those stress factors, and seek to alleviate the potentially destructive influences of stress in their lives. They must examine whether their conduct remains consistent with their professed beliefs, and confront themselves and others when incongruities between their beliefs and their behaviors arise (Caldwell, 2009).

Understanding insights about identity, self-awareness, and self-deception would present a person with practical implications in important ways (Caldwell, 2009). Being open and transparent are fundamental to establishing effective relationships. Clearly

understanding oneself and considering how others see them provide valuable insight in being able to manage social contracts that exist between leaders and their followers. Leaders who conduct a regular personal inventory or self-assessment gain greater clarity toward goal attainment. Leaders who “walk the talk” avoid the incongruence of behaviors inconsistent with their espoused commitments and can help organizations build trust. The corollary is also true: Leaders who do not align actions with values destroy trust.

Caldwell (2009) found that acknowledging the characteristics of self-deception in individual and organizational relationships reduced leaders’ potential to engage in self-deceptive behaviors. Reminding oneself of one’s moral duties and the mission enhances leaders’ understanding of the breadth of obligations owed to other parties and makes those duties specific (Caldwell, 2009). Leaders must remain vigilant to preserve and protect their honor, courage, and commitment to their mission and their people.

**Missing Forehandedness.** *Forehandedness* is a concept that has appeared in every version of *Command at Sea*. It includes awareness, planning, and staying ready for the next challenge. Arthur, Day, Jaworski, Jung, M., Nonaka, Scharmer, and Senge (2002) noted that the challenges for leaders have magnified due to waves of change sweeping the world—digitization, globalization, demographic shifts, migration, and individualization, as well as the rapid degradation of social and natural capital. The pace of change was determined to be faster, the frequency and amplitude of restructuring and reforming were significantly greater, and the pathways of emerging futures seemed to be less predictable than they were in earlier times (Arthur et al., 2002). In today’s organic and dynamic environment, knowledge as an intangible resource centers on the domain of

human action and relationships. Leaders must cope with the informal social networks essential to all work, the role of mental models, and the emerging patterns of interdependence among complex and highly distributed processes of innovation. On ships, much of that is built in to the way of the sea and the ship. COs must develop their cognitive capacity to pay attention to intangible sources of knowledge and knowing within themselves *Forehandedness* the standard Navy term known, reflects the ability to stay ahead of, or at least even, with the developing situation, and still be able to handle one that follows.

Most traditions that account for the journey of self-cultivation have focused on three core elements: study, practice, and service (Arthur et al., 2002). Arthur et al. concluded that leadership cultivation should focus on developing those three elements in the context of everyday work lives. Service on ships in preparation for Command does that. Arthur, et al. thought study was being able to “*see reality*, to sense what is going on in the here and now” (p. 12). Practice meant to “*meditate on reality*, to take conversations and collective processes to a deeper level, to the point of stillness where knowing comes to the surface and, to serve meant to *collectively co-create reality*, to bring forth new worlds that serve new possibilities for living” (Arthur et al., 2002, p. 12). Those who command live in a world of specifics that clashes with the world of feeling, apparitions, and fragile relationships. They must learn to navigate both.

**Delusions.** Commanding officers who have met the wickets to be assigned to command gain a strong sense of self-importance that may blind them to divergent points of view. Conger (2002) warned of the danger of delusion in stating that qualities that made leaders great (Awadzi-Calloway, 2010) could also cause their downfall. Success

and self-confidence–self-efficacy per Awadzi-Calloway (2010)–often breed narcissism and a sense of infallibility (Conger, 2002, p. 4.). A review of the reports from *Tailhook* validates these findings. Conger noted that recent corporate scandals have highlighted the dangers and temptations that come with power. “Narcissistic leaders can lose touch with reality, promote self-serving and grandiose aims, and use the company as a vehicle for personal gain” (Conger, 2002, p. 4). Recent CO failings almost all originated from this perspective. From this blind spot, COs have violated their own moral code, disrupted the trust the Navy has placed in them, and shaken the confidence the nation imputes to its COs. Bad decisions made from impulse or disdain for controls have ended in catastrophe. From Captain Graf to Commander Borchers, all displayed a lack of awareness of what they had become.

Conger also noted that the effects of poor leadership might foster an organization’s culture that reflects an unsustainable path. Informality or over familiarity discourages the use of effective control systems, clear lines of responsibility and coordination (Conger, 2002). “Two fundamental processes often lead to leadership derailment–the leader's own potential for narcissism and control, and the dynamics of dependency cultivated among followers. Both can create problems for the leader and his or her organization” (Conger, 2002, p. 4).

Those who would command must remain aware of negative feedback signals from the environment and their followers. Conger (2002) in noting that leadership is a “double-edged sword,” cautioned that the qualities of vision and foresight when coupled with certain leaders' tendencies towards narcissism have led to personal goals that were ultimately detached from shipboard realities. To counter this, organizations, their

shipmates, and leaders themselves must assume far greater responsibility. Leaders should become more reflective and learn to be objective observers of their own behavior and actions.

Likewise, Singh (2008) warned there are “Impostors masquerading as leaders.” He suggested that sensational reports about executive malfeasance (both in India and abroad) when combined with reports of Commanding Officers’ scurrilous behaviors showed that many who have managed their way to the top were in reality ‘small men’ masquerading as leaders. He charged that those types of leaders were “opportunistic, greedy and without scruples. They were more preoccupied with their selfish pursuits, their mad megalomania or reckless gambling” (Singh, 2008, p. 733).

In parallel statistic to the sacking of CEOs that increased fourfold since 1995, ship COs have also been failing in increasing numbers since 2000. What should decision-makers look for in succession candidates? Singh (2008) underlined the necessity to avoid the trap of overemphasizing any single indicator of leadership potential. Selection boards must take a more comprehensive view (Singh, 2008, p. 737). Singh contended that virtue was not enough. Leadership according to Singh had three essential ingredients: “Energy, (or drive and passion to excel)” (p. 738), “Expertise” (p. 739), and “Integrity” which he defined as “consistent compliance with non-negotiable values” (p. 739). Singh proposed a model of those three elemental leadership qualities could be like “gears meshed together. To function efficiently, they must be synchronized. Each quality must complement the remaining two” (Singh, 2008, p. 742). Leaders falter when any leg of the three-cornered stool gets shortcut.

**Just Plain Bad Luck or Bad Timing.** In a few cases, bad timing or bad luck may also cause a situation to founder. Chatfield (2009) in her study of the experience of interim commanding officers reported that COs might be detached for cause for three main reasons. Misconduct, unsatisfactory performance involving one or more significant events resulting from gross negligence or complete disregard for duty, and unsatisfactory performance of duty over an extended period of time usually result in a senior expressing a “loss of confidence” in an officer in command. Other than misconduct, the others can be the result of poor timing such as inheriting a green crew or having a significant portion of the crew depart with the old CO, or just bad luck. Other causes of derailment may have little to do with any action or inaction from a leader. Being put into the wrong situation or placed into a challenging environment has led to the downfall of many good men. Based on studies from the Center for Creative Leadership in the 1980s, Capretta et al. (2008) reported that the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) discovered that executives who derailed shared one or more of the following causes. They “had problems with interpersonal relationships; failed to hire, build, and lead a team; failed to meet business objectives; were unable or unwilling to change or adapt; or lacked a broad functional orientation” (Capretta et al., 2008, p. 48). Moreover, Capretta et al. also noted that Mel Korcher had reported between 30–50% of executives fail. The Navy could not sustain itself with that record of COs being removed from their commands. It is in crisis with a five percent failure rate.

In 1996, CCL followed up with a second study on derailment and found top two derailment factors when comparing American and European executives: having problems with interpersonal relationships and being unable or unwilling to change or adapt. Naval

officers who run the gauntlet of preparation for command must have developed some effective relationships and built up the confidence that they could succeed in meeting the challenges they will face—both expected and unexpected. Those who falter, usually get low marks at the end on both maintaining relationships and driving achievement.

### **Avoiding Derailment**

The Center for Creative Leadership hosts courses designed to aid further development of senior Navy and Army officers upon their selection for promotions to flag or general officers. A key focus area across all leadership styles is helping them learn to be authentic. The failure of executive authenticity (i.e., executive ‘inauthenticity’) reflects the moral deterioration of executive leadership. Earlier the record showed study, experience and performance set the stage for selection to command. According to Novicevic, Harvey, Buckley, Brown, and Evans (2006), the “only way to acquire knowledge of how management phenomena evolve as meaningful cultural phenomena is through analyzing historical works” (p. 65). The best leaders and managers balance the tensions of personal values with the tensions of organizational values. Novicevic et al. proposed four possible outcomes:

1. Leadership failure (inauthentic leadership characterized by moral deterioration of a resigned leader).
2. Leadership crisis (pseudo-authentic leadership characterized by moral paralysis of a perfectionist leader).
3. Leadership tragedy (pseudo-authentic leadership characterized by moral disengagement of a narcissistic leader).

4. Leadership success (authentic leadership characterized by moral creativity of an authentic leader) in aligning authentically personal moral convictions with the moral demands of organizational leadership. (Novicevic et al., 2006, p. 70)

Capretta et al. (2008) noted successful executive development programs as recommended by the Center for Creative Leadership provided for diversity of experience; built emotional stability and composure; and helped future leaders learn to handle mistakes. All practiced and refined their interpersonal skills, understood the primacy of maintaining credibility and integrity, and upgraded their technical and cognitive skills. At a personal level, an individual's responsibilities included becoming self-aware, learning or improving how to become an acute and agile learner; observing others' reactions; and actively seeking coaching and mentoring.

At the organizational level, Capretta et al. (2008) enumerated the key responsibilities in creating a system in the organization that integrated future leader development into managers' work. Leaders must develop methods to support calculated risk taking. Development schemes must allow managers to complete job assignments before transferring to new jobs, let them finish. Every level should arrange for a mechanism to provide feedback, both formal and informal, into the organizational culture at all levels. It may include executive coaching, or more directly, establishing a Talent Management Office to be proactive in future leader development. Those relationships may enable prioritizing and addressing derailment factors. Many COs will also go through crucibles, travails as their command tour progresses toward success, or descends

into failure. Personal shortcomings often set the stage for later results that fail to meet expectations.

### **Trust as the Glue**

Using the major psychological theories that deal with emotional dynamics, one can roughly describe three types of emotional relations that may exist between leaders and followers: regressive, symbolic, and developmental (Popper, 2004). Naval leaders who yearn for command must learn to remain in the developmental relationships. Trust develops through relationships and grows as each party begins to understand and meet the other's expectations (Harvey, 2011). Leaders try to communicate in a number of ways, but "Telling isn't teaching" and leaders must learn to follow-up, go look for themselves, and continue to probe when things are not lining up.

### **Summary of Assessment of Command**

Command success can be measured by a number of factors. One could pursue to measure the CO's level of trust/ credibility with the crew; or could try to decipher the CO's ability to achieve forehandedness. Certain questions could be asked to understand how well the CO was able to balance expectations, both from above and from below. Always, the main assessment is learning how well the ship succeeded in executing its mission, and learning how that mission was defined. Can the crew's level of performance and confidence, and resulting self-efficacy be articulated? Are the absences of major incidents such as the fact that the ship never ran aground or had a collision enough to declare success? Did the CO respond well to the challenges, adapt to external inputs, and show versatility in meeting them? Did CO exhibit the components of PAL/

RICH? How did the CO grow? Did the COs establish a “Command Presence,” or discuss how they learned to be more reflective, or improved their sense of self-appreciation, leading to infectious self-efficacy?

### **Commanding Officers and Leadership Models in Action**

Several prominent leadership models assist one in understanding what a ship’s CO must be able to do. In the late 1970s through the early 1980s, the Navy and McBer Associates collaborated in a study of command excellence. The study investigated what made great commands great performers. It was the people and the way they interacted. Their complete list is included in Appendix F, Findings of Studies on Ships’ Commanding Officers. Among the key drivers for superior commands were execution of planning, maintaining standards, communications, training and development, and resulting *Espirit de Corps*. Sheppard (1996), Stavridis (2008), and Abrashoff (2002) mentioned each of these factors as contributors to their success.

### **The Positive Approach**

Coming from a Positive Psychology background, Luthans et al. (2001) developed the “Positive Approach to Leadership (PAL)” (p. 6) to augment traditional perspectives of leadership. Most of the previous approaches, based on traits or relationships, had recognized the importance of positivity, but only briefly focused any attention to the contributions of confidence and optimism. Luthans et al.’s aim was to employ all levels of analysis from positive psychology to develop a more comprehensive description of leadership. Led by efforts of research psychologist Martin Seligman and Gallup’s Donald Clifton among others, positive psychology developed as a response to counter the

focus of most psychology that centered on explaining what was “wrong with people” (Luthans, et al., p. 6). Positive psychology explores at least three levels of analysis: subjective, micro (individual), and macro (the group). Much like the Gallup surveys, the subjective level looked at past, present, and future feelings of individuals along scales of satisfaction, hope and optimism, and flow and happiness. At the micro level, it sought to analyze individual positive traits and qualities such as capacity for love and vocation, courage, inter-personal skills, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future mindedness, spirituality, high talent and wisdom. At the macro level, this approach investigated positive civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship qualities such as responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic. For anyone to progress to a better state, the attributes selected to define that improvement must be measurable, open to development, and manageable in both self and others. Efforts to track performance improvement in today’s organizations usually center on this track.

Luthans et al. (2001) identified what they termed “RICH” components of PAL: Realistic optimism, emotional Intelligence, Confidence (positive efficacy), and Hope. PAL offered a more advanced model from transformational leadership, which only included aspects found at the organizational level of leadership. Luthans et al. noted that various researchers had created measures to operationalize the four dimensions of PAL. Schneider (1999) had developed measures for Realistic Optimism based on leniency of the past, appreciation of the present, and opportunity seeking for the future. Luthans et al. built from Goleman’s Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Bar On’s “sophisticated” definition and EQ Inventory and added in Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, and Sitarenios’s

(2001) validation of the importance of early development, and Abraham's (1999), and then Barling, Slater, and Kelloway's (2000), use of EI as a definite indicator of Transformational leadership.

Leadership confidence or self-efficacy the third PAL measure had been operationalized by Wood and Bandura (1989). Luthans et al. (2001) credit Bandura with explaining that positive efficacy is the center of PAL since it opens up possibilities for action. Bandura demonstrated that motivators were resident when people, as a core belief, conclude they do possess the power to produce desired results. Wood and Bandura (1989) showed how to develop confident leaders through self-efficacy. A future leader must have a track record of personal mastery experience or successful performance. The development path should have included vicarious learning or modeling others' success, and receiving positively oriented persuasion and feedback. Additionally, the person must have experienced "physiological and psychological arousal" (Luthans et al. , 2001, p. 15). These may serve as benchmarks of COs' motivations.

Self-efficacy or confidence should be the center of any leader development program. Luthans et al. (2001) noted that Hope as a multidimensional construct that include both willpower ("motivated determination") and pathways (they used "waypower" as a sense of combining vision, planning, and action to meet goals). Willpower and waypower sustain a hopeful leader. In describing his trek to lead the first team to the North Pole, Arctic explorer, Navy Admiral Robert E. Peary echoed Seneca when he vowed, "I shall find a way or make one."

A recently completed study on the effect of Positive Leadership on military performance by Butler (2011) concluded that senior enlisted personnel who experienced positive leaders felt empowered and gained a better sense of job performance and job satisfaction. The leader's recognition of their good performance increased self-esteem and confidence in meeting greater challenges. Many noted they were inspired to emulate those leaders who exhibited the positive approach. Butler recommended that the Positive Approach become a key component in Navy leadership education.

### **Three Command at Sea Experiences**

Novicevic, Harvey, Buckley, Brown, and Evans (2006) concluded, "The only way to acquire knowledge of how management phenomena evolve as meaningful cultural phenomena is through analyzing historical works" (p. 65). Conger (1998) argued for more qualitative methods to be applied to research studies. He noted that the majority of qualitative studies get published as books due to the increased rigor of peer review demanded by journals. Bryman (2004) concluded that it is important for leaders "at the very apex of a hierarchy to be managers of meaning, especially in relation to the change process, but also to ensure that the more unexciting aspects of instrumental leadership are done" (Bryman, 2004, p. 755). Alvesson (1996) declared the importance of reflexivity for leaders. Three naval officers who commanded destroyers at sea in the later part of the 20th century have provided an opening into the thoughts and aspirations of their times in command. Each presents insights as to the routine and unexpected events, motivations, practices, challenges, and the shifting expectations of those who command.

**Sheppard. *Destroyer skipper: A memoir of command at sea.*** Commander Don Sheppard commanded a destroyer between 1973 and 1975. He represented the forefront

of the post-Vietnam Navy. Sheppard, a "mustang" sailor had risen through the Navy holding every rank and rate from seaman recruit in 1948, to full commander in 1977, tried to capture the daily drama of commanding a U.S. Navy destroyer, and recounted his efforts to push himself and his men to ever greater deeds of accomplishment. A CO of a river patrol boat squadron in Vietnam and a true war hero by forty, his book on command spanned his tours in joint duty, as executive officer, and then onto, and in, Command (Sheppard, 1996). He had been trained well as a seaman, was promoted to Chief, and selected for commissioning, and assigned to sea. As a junior officer, he qualified and trained as an OOD (Fleet), established his footing in the officer community, and had heeded the call of the sounds of the gun as a young Lieutenant.

His story of Command starts in the jungles and waterways of Vietnam as a Lieutenant, follows on to Joint duty in Japan, his assignment as XO, and eventual selection for Command. Following the path of many autobiographic accounts, Sheppard describes how he employed his knowledge of people and concepts of good leadership to set the stage for performance at every level in the chain of command on a ship. As XO, he demonstrated how to manage relationships with a bad CO and minimize the negative effect a poor CO had on the ship. Sheppard's challenge abated when he learned the CO would transfer early. Sheppard relates how the new CO and he turned the ship around, while still facing challenges from basic maintenance, to over confident warfighters, to the need for young sailors to grow up. He also hints at the challenge to moral conduct faced by those on liberty in the Philippines in the period of the 1960s–1970s.

Sheppard tracked the development of his leadership skills molded by different people, situations, and challenges he faced along the way. Finally, getting his shot at

command, he was surprised how much he still had to teach others about the ship and the nature of work at sea. He recounted how he had to motivate, follow-up, and allow others to gain self-efficacy, as they became competent mariners on their own. He conveys how he took command of an older ship and a crew with low morale and turned it into a top-notch warship (Wirick, 1996). One reviewer noted, “He ultimately discovered the hard truth that being a leader is a job of constant vigilance, made up of taking care of all of the seemingly minor details, and making sure to get them all right. He learned how leaders must set an example of excellence, clearly communicate goals, and provide honest criticism, and sometimes, even praise to their personnel” (Wirick, 1996, p. 55).

Sheppard (1996) explored the challenge of command preparation as XO and discovered his Navy experience, when combined with the concepts espoused by Z-grams and his understanding of people, worked to make the ship a complete team. He also pulled no punches in describing events that these days might derail a career- physically grabbing a young sailor to get his attention, hitting a whale on a dependents’ cruise, and discussing the carousing that has been the subject of recent failures. Sheppard put into play the leadership techniques he had developed throughout his Naval career, (Sheppard, 1996) and demonstrated, with stories of the ship and his men, how he ultimately succeeded in shaping an efficient, highly motivated crew and a first rate fighting ship (Wirick, 1996).

Sheppard’s pointers for developing COs could be arranged in terms of professional, personal, and outside influences. As a professional, Sheppard stressed the importance of Navy ways: the “routine.” The formal conduct of business across engineering, operations, and standard reports that set a well-run ship apart from others.

He touched on key issues all CO/XO teams have to deal with such as “mess cook” management, navigation, conning alongside, and the basic Navy programs 3M (Material Maintenance, and Management), PQS (Personal Qualification Program), Safety, and Damage Control. The Planned Maintenance Program (PMS) was one of many programs where leadership and management combined to create command competency. PMS practices set the tone across the rest of the ship’s programs and clearly established expectations of required performance levels. The system still demanded constant attention to detail to organize, deputize, and supervise to ensure success.

Sheppard believed “bad ships” did not exist; he did say some situations revealed an occasional bad CO. Good COs alerted the quarterdeck when departing their ships to allow anyone who needed a last word with the CO to catch them prior to leaving. The CO gives developing leaders that extra boost of motivation through positive feedback or challenging remarks needed to spark the finish the last five percent of many projects. One method Sheppard suggested to placate a mis-focused CO was to respond with “Yes, Sir. I’ll get to work on that.” Then, place the unreasoning demand on a far back burner.

Sheppard reinforced several key tidbits involving trust, competence, and leader excellence. He saw trust as a relationship that was created by meeting expectations from both ends, leaders and workers. Admiral Clark’s Covenant model would have resonated with him. He noted that “pride is watchdog of efficiency”—but that pride was developed and refined through recognized performance. Sheppard related several instances of the refrain “Take care of your men, and they will take care of you.” No captain commands alone.

On a personal challenge and developing note, Sheppard fought seasickness his whole career. He discussed the importance of the “family” nature of the wardroom and stressed feeding both mind and body at wardroom table. He was forthright in that he expected excellence of himself and his men and their ship. He noted that the best leaders expected good performance, and often demanded it improve to come up to standards. Sheppard got it because he treated people fairly and encouraged them to keep learning; and expected them to be able to do the job assigned.

Sheppard warned future COs to keep their egos in check, and that all developing leaders must avoid “CO or XO says. Leaders must be able to stand up and push when things are not right- from directives, to decisions, to half-truths to bad examples.

Sheppard disclosed the outside challenges and the changing times, which brought promise and new challenges. Navy leaders, especially to those in command who expected blind obedience rather than thoughtful execution had to be ready. Gone were power-centered artifacts that held sailors down from locker clubs, liberty cards, and Zumwalt’s “Chicken Regs.” Several leaders had difficulties making the change because they were not taking charge when they should. Leaders should “Just Lead.” Zumwalt, as many, hated the childish arguments among “tribes”: Aviators and carriers, AMPHIBs and Surface ships, Submarines and targets. These views still dominate the focus of discussions of what the Navy should be and how the war at sea should be prosecuted.

Sheppard provided insights into the challenges of personal relationships, developing subordinates, harassing seniors, and future challenges of drugs, alcohol, and homosexuality. Sheppard’s ability to be genuine in accordance with authentic leadership precepts stands out. Sheppard revealed he made composites for the people mentioned in

the book. He noted that some would recognize themselves and he hoped he had “rendered them satisfactorily” (p. x). He added, “Some will not recognize themselves, for they have never seen themselves through the eyes of others” (p. x). Sheppard knew himself.

**Abrashoff: *It’s Your Ship– Leadership secrets from the best damn ship in the Navy.*** Commander Mike Abrashoff who commanded USS *Benfold* 1997–1999 took a separate tack to lay out his “secrets” to building a winning team. His book, tailored to inspire leaders everywhere, recounts the challenges faced by the Navy and *Benfold* during his time in command. Abrashoff (2002) laid out concepts that appeal to a universal audience.

He focused on eleven imperatives:

1. Take command
2. Lead by example
3. Listen aggressively
4. Communicate purpose and meaning
5. Create a climate of trust
6. Look for results not salutes
7. Take calculated risks
8. Go beyond standard procedure
9. Build up your people
10. Generate unity
11. Improve your people’s quality of life

Abrashoff was upfront in enumerating challenges that he faced with his crew that mirrored the challenges the Navy was facing across the board. A potential mismatch

existed between the ship's capabilities and the actual military mission requirements. The lack of sense of accomplishment was leading to very poor retention and rising first term attrition, resulting in lowered expertise across the Fleet. Most surprising to Abrashoff, he found he inherited a "sullen and resentful crew" including several cases of "unprofessional" relationships.

Abrashoff had positive experiences in preparing for command and centered on learning about his people as a priority. Abrashoff took time to get to know his people. In a ship, that effort can backfire if the CO fails to hold people accountable and begins to excuse their lack of performance because he learned about their previous victimization. Surprised by the crew's attitude and acknowledging his lack of experience, he surmised the best course for command was to give more responsibility back to those who should take it. He surprised the crew by asking them for solutions and then going with their suggestions. As well, he had fun showing readers how he solved these specific problems as they arose in his tour in *Benfold*.

He related his fortune to have learned from good role models and searing crucible experiences that helped him focus on people and the mission. His keys: understand yourself, make key choices based on values, build positive culture, assert self-confidence, and continue doing the right thing based on "gut feel." Shifting the expected leadership mindset from micromanagement to taking initiative, he modeled the mindset necessary to shift from accepting below the minimum to expecting good performance. By monitoring, not micromanaging, all were able to recognize and celebrate when good performance happened, rather than not even acknowledging small victories. Abrashoff succeeded by leaving the command in better shape than he found it.

**Stavridis: *Destroyer Command*.** Stavridis (2008) tracked through his experience as the second CO of a new Aegis Destroyer USS *Barry* following the officer who later became the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO). Unlike Abrashoff, he had nothing but glowing words for his predecessor (Stavridis, 2008). His journal, kept while the ship was underway, stressed the routine and nearly endless meeting of sea and sky. He also employed stories broken into serial vignettes to capture many of the small details of events that often go unappreciated by those who never had command. One can decipher several themes that run through his record of his time in *Barry*, Fall 1993–Fall 1995. He related his love of the family and the sea, the constants of routine, and the pressure of striving to live up to the examples he had experienced in his path to command. Stavridis also discovered different challenges compared to what he had anticipated.

Stavridis covered shiphandling and special evolutions such as UNREP and planeguard duties that all who command at sea must master. He covered the specifics of good watchstanders in handling and reporting contacts. Stavridis related other elements of seamanship such as making transits of narrow passages and the Suez Canal. He made readers feel the pressures of sweating through inspections and other preparations for sea. His descriptions of entering non-traditional ports to show the flag showed how the world had shifted from confrontation with the Soviet Union to a more globalized and interconnected economy. People issues were among the most challenging events. He demonstrated both compassion and respect for Navy tradition as he described his agony over young men who failed to qualify for further service after bad incidents in a single night of shore leave. As with Sheppard, he was not afraid to discuss having a drink and the necessity of learning to handle the load, or just not imbibe. He reviewed the necessity

of detailed preparation for inspections; as well as taking readers through the highs and lows COs and crews experienced during those challenges. His mentor had cautioned him that the first six months would be the most trying, and the last three months would be the most dangerous.

An avid reader and student of command, he employed Keegan's mask to describe how he sealed himself to conduct Captain's Mast. He named new challenges as the first DDG to integrate women crewmembers, both officers and enlisted. His report was that it worked. Later COs might disagree. He worried that the Navy was losing its focus on warfighting and was pressured to both retain the best, while downsizing due to the end of the Cold War. As most COs, he tired of "VIP's" dropping in unannounced, but was always proud to demonstrate the ship and its crew's prowess and understanding of their equipment and their missions.

He sensed command as the best form of service. He declared one would never work with people of higher quality, gain a life of high adventure and travel, and, even if one stays for a career, can transition, just over 40, to a second life with an excellent retirement plan to cover the dream (p. 37). To go with that sense of service, he carefully discussed the fear of failure that can stalk any commander. Stavridis invoked Keegan's mask in discussing the burden of command. Shortened timelines to get ready for inspections, failure to get mandatory reports completed on time, and lagging performance led to pressures that only those ultimately accountable can appreciate.

Although *Barry* was a newly commissioned ship, the ship had similar problems to other ships with rust constantly breaking out on the ship's sides that had to be tackled as part of the routine. Ship's boats, normally the most reliably maintained equipment on the

ship, were newly assigned Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats (RHIB), which suffered many issues and plagued efficient boarding operations and liberty exchanges. Navy operations continue year round; therefore, three-day weekends and holidays can be spent at sea. Stavridis recalled spending Thanksgiving at sea, and six months later, celebrating Memorial Day underway just prior to the ship participating in the 50th anniversary of D-Day off Normandy.

In an effort to avoid any incidents in the last sixty-day period of deployment as well as to ensure he remained focused and not distracted, Stavridis recalled making lists to check off accomplishments. Having those lists seemed to build a sense of accomplishment and meaning as the deployment continued. He recalls “pubbing” in Ireland, Scotland, Greece and Spain; and preparing for the toughest assignment for any ship and crew, a post-deployment shipyard maintenance period. Lists helped him prepare the crew for that challenge.

Stavridis attributed his performance and that of his command to timing, great people, great assignments in preparation, and luck. His tale of command ended as he departed for higher responsibilities and future promotions.

### **Summary of “Challenges to Command”**

Challenges in command occur in several dimensions. Based on the nominal 27-month operating schedule for ships, expected challenges flow in synch with the phase. Maintenance, basic, integration, deployment, return, and preparing for maintenance present different challenges to the ship’s routine and focus for attention of the CO. Naval tradition bends slowly. The advancement of women and full integration of diverse backgrounds into ship’s crews has challenged those commanders who were tasked with

overseeing their success. Each command faces tests based on qualification, certification, or inspections. Travails occur as unexpected assignments, changing demands and schedules, or other significant incidents affecting the crew. Temptations have figured into several recent failures when COs failed to deal with sexual urges or alcoholic induced exposure of deeper character flaws (Light, 2012).

The challenges could be gauged another way by professional, performance, and personal. Professional challenges differ whether it is Command of new ship, meeting the change of demographics, or changing mission focus/operational hubs. The impact of Tailhook continues to reverberate through the force, not just in the aviation community. DOD Transformation is changing everything, and the concept of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) supplanted the traditional view of War at Sea (WAS). Preparing future generations of officers and ships to sustain the Navy remains a continuous challenge. The CO's responsibility is to capture a young person's imagination and destiny to strive for command.

Performance quality can be employed as an indicator of the people who choose to serve including developing forehandedness, growing trust, and enhancing resilience and self-efficacy of those who command. Challenges have come aimed at the "heart of officers" in terms of character/ personality defects along moral or judgmental lines. or the lack of scruples/ a sense of shame. As well, the more one succeeds and listens to the accolades; the danger of delusion and a sense of entitlement can overcome key leaders. Unfortunately, naval officers are not exempt.

## **Leadership Development in Action**

Reflecting on the qualities of an officer from John Paul Jones, an officer must become “more than a capable mariner,” but what does “more” mean? The PAL model can be integrated with other models of leadership to observe vicariously a nominal ship’s commanding officer (“CO”) in action. Combining the practice of leadership development as related by the three COs and the previous topics from various leadership theories through the positive approach can add value to understanding how each of these spectra of the leadership continuum can be focused to produce an integrated leadership concept. Several models for leadership look at the relationship between leader and follower. Transactional relationships fall into two categories: constructive transactions and corrective transactions.

Naval officers’ leadership lessons can come obliquely. In mixing development as a capable mariner with the spirit of leadership, one could observe a series of leadership lessons, by monitoring a CO in action. In teaching new naval officers to “conn” the ship down a channel, the CO normally starts out in a constructive mode (Stavridis, 2008). Early preparations include planning the courses the ship should follow, defining how much rudder should be used to make each course change, and considering how to manage the ship’s speed. The CO and Conning Officer also discuss how they will respond if other ships are coming up or going down the channel. During the transit, the officer with the “CONN” usually stays in the center of the bridge to enable seeing clearly ahead of the ship and both sides. As long as the ship sails smoothly down the channel, contingent rewards include the Captain relaxing and even staying in the CO’s bridge chair (Stavridis, 2008). Accomplishing precise navigation results in the Captain remarking, “Well done!”

However, the “skipper” must remain vigilant and be prepared to manage-by-exception. In a channel 500 feet wide, giving the ship a 250-foot wide lane on the right hand side of the channel to pass down. When combined with the “width” (beam) about 70 feet, a ship normally has about 90 feet either side within which to steer safely. At a speed of 15 “knots,” it makes 1500 yards in 3 minutes or 1500 feet in a minute. As long as the ship does not veer way off course, it can pass through a 12-mile stretch from the ocean to the pier in about an hour. But, if the “CONN” gets just a degree and a half off course, in two and one half minutes the ship could be outside the lane. Not only must the CONN manage the direction, but also the CONN must understand where the ship is and what effects the environment is having on it (Stavridis, 2008). Experienced mariners could recall that the standard fix interval, the time between Navigational fixes, is three minutes. CONN must already know where the ship is in relation to the channel through other factors. Observing the buoy line, watching for prominent landmarks, and occasionally checking the radar, the conning officer can keep the ship safe. Now is the time to examine the Captain’s “management-by-exception.” The CO maintains a diary in his head of how closely the CONN must be watched (Stavridis, 2008). The CO’s first warning comes as the ship drifts to the right side of the channel. Here, the CO asks a question to cue the CONN into checking the ship’s position and drift. If the question was enough to prompt the CONN into action, the CONN corrected the course and the ship headed back toward a safer path. To get it back to the planned course will take another two and one half minutes.

If the Captain were delayed or the ship actually veered far outside the planned course, the choice of passive management-by-exception may result in the situation

becoming untenable, even for the CO's years of seamanship experience. The ship is in danger of going aground. The same pattern can be applied to many organizations. Leaders must "take fixes" along the way. It is always better to make small corrections as soon as the deviation is discovered, rather than try to make large ones late in the game. Not only does CONN get to direct the watchteam and note how they respond to orders, the pattern and flow builds confidence not only as a mariner, but also as a leader and future commander. The CONN has advanced to become a more capable mariner through performance and reflection and begins to fulfill the recognition "I can do this!"

Now, to observe transformational leadership, observe how the Captain lays out the overall strategy for qualification and advancement for all the officers and sailors on the ship (Abrashoff, 2002, Sheppard, 1996; Stavridis, 2008;). In so doing, the CO epitomizes idealized influence by being "Captain" and showing his charismatic side. Through this, the captain arouses and inspires the ship to perform well as a team (now in PAL lights). The CO emphasizes winning and advancing and demonstrates how when one benefits, all benefit. He challenges the crew to learn all they can about the ship, their shipmates, and themselves. In many days at sea, each of them will have that understanding tested. The reflective CO also knows how to read the crew and what their desires could be; always thinking that each person is so much more valuable than what they are currently producing. He helps them be hungry for more success through recognition and rewards, but also equipping them to become more capable than just worrying about themselves. Building positive self-efficacy, the CO leads celebrations of all success.

## **Building Adaptability**

Ship's COs must be ever vigilant and recognize the need to respond to continual change. The lurking challenge compels a Commander to carry the whole apparatus of knowledge to be ready to bring for the appropriate decision by total assimilation of mind and life—e.g., Captain Abrashoff's "gut feeling." The Commander's knowledge must be transformed into general capability which Clausewitz described using the French term "coup 'd'oeil"—or inner, all seeing eye (von Clausewitz in Howard & Paret, (Eds.), 1976, p. 147). This assembly of knowledge and observation produces in commanders their extra measure of self-efficacy to make decisions and give orders confidently and reliably.

To improve understanding leader performance in organizational settings, Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, and Fleishman (2000) described a capability model for that accounted for both skill and knowledge requirements. It also defined the patterns for leader development and provided scenarios for leaders to express those capabilities over their careers. Leaders must understand the interdependencies among systems, and people's habits. Mumford et al. noted that systems theory applications helped one recognize three fundamental contradictions of organizational life. Organizations must balance the tendency toward stability with the need for driving change to survive the never-ending shifts in the environment, technology, and available resources. Maintaining the status quo or resting on one's laurels brought about by prior achievements pose a significant threat to continued success. Second, the loosely linked subsystems that comprise organizations may not agree on goals or strategies for coping with changes. Third, organizations must not only cope with objective performance demands and the

bottom line, they must recognize the unique needs of the people who comprise the subsystems.

Environmental change, subsystem differences, and the diversity of human beings result in organizational contexts defined by complexity, conflict, and dynamism. Under these conditions, end goals and paths to goal attainment are, at best, uncertain. To survive and prosper, organizations must control conflict, position themselves to adjust to change, and choose the best paths to goal attainment. Accordingly, organizational leaders who are tasked with maintaining organizational viability must search for goals and paths to goal attainment that will sustain the organization and ensure that the work gets done. Thus, a leader's performance is a function of whether he or she can identify goals, construct viable goal paths, and direct others along these paths in a volatile, changing socio-technical environment (Mumford, O'Connor, Clifton, Connelly, & Zaccaro, 1993). "Mission first, people always" has been an operational mantra across various commands in the U.S. Air Force, it also resonates for the Navy, especially on ships. At sea, usually no one else is available to turn to get immediate help. Leaders must not only be able to define departmental, unit or organizational missions; they must be able to coordinate the activities of others motivating them to meet mission requirements. Additionally, they must circumvent or resolve issues impeding progress towards accomplishing organizational goals. Selection and implementation of actions to bring about goal attainment represents a form of problem solving making the generation, evaluation, and implementation of proactive and reactive solutions key to leader effectiveness.

## **Synthesis of the Gap in Studies of Commanders at Sea**

Discovering what recent COs say about the challenges of command may aid a longitudinal look to discern how they have shifted over the years. Multiple studies have explored aspects of specific situations of command or the potential for different styles of leadership to exist among successful COs. Although previous scholars have investigated precise aspects of command and command at sea, no study has taken a holistic approach to seek to identify the view from the bridge as COs through the ages recount their challenges in command.

## **Synopsis of Qualitative Research Methods**

Qualitative methodology has the capacity to examine and analyze data from multiple sources to use in models and hypotheses construction in a generative process (Creswell, 2003). Forms and sources of data employed in qualitative research include interviews, text drawn from print, televised, and virtual media and observations *in natura*, *in situ*, or *in vivo*. Following the cessation of paradigm wars among researchers (Bryman, 2006) and the expanding capacity of technology and the internet to capture images, sound, and dense, authentic, and intricate information, Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007) posed exciting predictions about the future of qualitative data to “reveal points of view and feelings normally inaccessible through direct questions” (p. 215). As contrasted with quantitative methodology, “qualitative measures can provide much greater detail and richer data that may be aggregated into discernible constructs” (Insch, Moore, & Murphy, 1997, p.1). Qualitative research methods also emphasize the subjects’ interpretation and delineation of context that often opens previously unconsidered

avenues of research inquiry that are generally free of preconceived research biases. In addition, qualitative methods can emphasize the process or unfolding of events over time to provide “additional information often untapped by static quantitative methods” (Bryman & Stephens, 1996, pp. 1-2).

Leadership studies have proceeded down two paths: quantitative and qualitative, or a combination of both. Each framework has benefitted our understanding of the phenomenon of leadership. Qualitative studies allow for construction of theories and models. Quantitative studies investigate hypotheses based on relationships, effects of interventions, and the accuracy of the model being tested within the institution’s environment. But, as Kilburg and Donohue (2011) concluded, no universal model exists. Day and Schyns (2010) in arguing for driving to a sense of agreement and consensus in leadership research claimed that good personal relationships (Clark’s covenants?), group consensus of the mission (Bennis’s vision?), and agreement on methods (buy in) keyed effective organizational performance. In a frequent theme in qualitative research on leadership, leaders are depicted as people who draw upon their followers’ ideas, beliefs, and values and recycle them back to them in the form of a distinctive leadership framework (Day & Schyns, 2010).

Qualitative research on leadership has brought to the fore several aspects of leadership processes that might “otherwise have been relatively unexplored” (Bryman, 2004, p. 754). Qualitative research on leadership has identified communication from the leader, the leader’s integrity, and how far he or she is trusted (and how far he or she trusts others) as particularly important for effective leadership. Similarly, there is a recurring emphasis among followers on leading from the front and leading by example. Qualitative

research on leadership has been particularly likely to emphasize the importance and significance of the leader as a manager of meaning who actively manipulates symbols in order to instill a vision, manage change, and achieve support for his or her direction (Bryman, 2004). In so doing, the leader establishes credibility, which allows followers to believe in and move toward the common goal articulated through the leader's exhortations.

### **Use of Qualitative Methods in Leadership Studies**

In an important and insightful article, Conger (1998) persuasively argued that the qualitative research paradigm was “the hallmark methodology” for advancing the knowledge and understanding of leadership. Conger indicated that while qualitative methods have the unmerited reputation among traditionalists and skeptics as being overly time consuming, dense, limited in application, and non-rigorous, the benefits of the method outweigh the challenges. Conger recommended that not only should a qualitative approach be a major tool of research, but the methodology of choice in the field of leadership studies.

Qualitative methods broaden the scope or “methodological diversity” (Bryman, 2004, p. 729) of scientific inquiry and provide apt tools for the research questions posed by this present study. Qualitative methods are ideally suited to uncovering leadership's various dimensions in seeking to define the many levels of intensity and fine distinctions among the views of leadership. Instead of prefabricated checklists and pat answers used in quantitative surveys, listening to how leaders describe their experiences offers researchers the flexibility to explore new details and take different perspectives, both those anticipated and those arising during the discussions (Conger, 1998). Additional

strengths of qualitative case study methodology involve Rogers' (2000) observation that "qualitative research methods can accurately portray human beings engaged in and shaped by complex psychological processes" (p. 76). In addition, qualitative methods are able to portray specifics and context as they show the outlier, insider, and firsthand points of view (Alvesson, 2003).

Researchers must create good questions. To be able to ask those questions and make the discoveries, researchers must practice good interview protocols. In interviewing, Knapik (2006) maintained the idea was to establish social conditions in which participants feel free to bring forth their meaningful concerns, not become driven by the researcher's own viewpoint. In seeking to discover insights, researchers should adopt a learner perspective. Good interviews orient to the object or phenomenon of interest in a world shared by the researcher as well as the participant. Rabionet (2011) noted that interview protocol consisted of two important components: introductions and well-prepared questions. The introductory protocol should include statements of confidentiality, consent, options to withdraw, and use and scope of the results. According to Agee (2009), good qualitative questions should invite a process of exploration and discovery. Good research questions are answerable. A question needs to move the researcher toward discovering what is happening in a *particular* situation with a *particular* person or group. The process of qualitative case study inquiry should encourage the possibilities for questioning personal theories or for expanding or modifying the original conceptual framework and research questions. Agee (2009) cautioned researchers to remain aware inquiries into other people's lives are *always* an exercise in ethics.

Once interviews and observations are recorded, analysis begins. Huberman and Miles (1983) noted five key analytic tasks: coding data, integrating qualitative and quantitative data sets, carrying out data reduction, designing data display, and drawing conclusions; followed by verification. The researcher must become intimately familiar with the data, and devise a method of coding the data that will reflect or clear out any subjective leaning.

Ruona in Swanson and Horton (2005) states that qualitative data analysis includes:

1. Sensing themes
2. Constant comparison
3. Recursiveness
4. Inductive and deductive thinking
5. Interpretation to generate meaning

For finding the themes, Ruona in Swanson and Holton (2005) recommended that these categories reflect the purpose of the research, be exhaustive and mutually exclusive, and be conceptually congruent and sensitizing. Healy and Perry (2000) proposed six quality criteria for the assessment of qualitative research from a realist perspective. Their first quality criterion was "ontological appropriateness" (p. 119). This study remained true to its philosophical roots. The second quality criterion for realism research was "contingent validity," which covers concepts of validity about generative mechanisms and the contexts that make them contingent or useful for the study. Since Realism employs a stance of a "value-aware" researcher who relies on multiple perceptions about a single reality, this concept of triangulation served as the third of six quality criteria.

Their three remaining criteria for realism research relate to methodology: methodological trustworthiness, analytic generalization (that is, theory building), and construct validity.

### **Limits of Quantitative Methods for Leadership Studies**

Quantitative methods, despite their important contribution to our scientific fund of knowledge, are limited in their ability to capture evolving and multiple-interactive and nonlinear relationships such as generally are represented by leadership (Conger, 1998). The detached and disinterested vision of objectivity espoused by quantitative methods serves as a limitation when studying leadership because so much of what shapes leadership is “symbolic and subjective” (Conger, 1998, p. 110). Conger maintained that quantitative methodology practices must reduce concepts to “concrete, streamlined, and usually static items” (p. 113) to achieve objectives of standardization and ensure validity in controlling compounding effects. Conger (1998) argued that this emphasis on standardization skewed findings toward normative themes (rather than exceptional or atypical events and individuals) and toward the face value or managed impressions of relationships rather than their authentic underlying and inner workings. Forcing observations into discrete concepts could create inaccuracies when discussing quantitative results in live settings to generate actions to improve leadership techniques. Conger concluded and predicted that qualitative methods, particularly innovative techniques and those involving direct *in vivo* observation (as opposed to interviews that have emerged as the central tool of current qualitative investigation), would promote the development and maturation of leadership studies.

Lincoln and Guba (2003) opened the qualitative researcher to a variety of techniques noting that it is compatible with the tradition of the qualitative paradigm to

blend and to borrow tools and techniques in order to build strategies of inquiry customized to the question or phenomena of interest. In a comprehensive review on the use of qualitative methods in leadership studies, (Bryman, 2004) agreed that qualitative researchers have constricted the variability of their techniques, but questioned Conger's conclusions about observation in that much of leadership is symbolic and underlying rather than overt, making direct observation inadequate to capture the intricacies of leadership. Bryman (2006) argued that quantitative and qualitative methods have similar strengths and limitations, but that the primary contribution of qualitative research to leadership studies has been its ability to capture "contextual, idiosyncratic, and routine, perception based, evaluative, symbolic, transitory, emergent, and complex factors, processes, and transactions in leadership" (Bryman, 2006, p. 156).

Bryman (2006) further cautioned that qualitative researchers must extend greater effort to attend to and build upon theory and work developed by others rather than operating in isolation from their peers in science. Bryman (1996) had noted that in the field of organizational leadership, qualitative research has revealed that key markers of effective leadership involve communication skills, leader integrity, and trustworthiness. These characteristics seem to apply to any setting and have been instrumental in illuminating the symbolic and metaphoric aspects of leadership along with its ability to show leaders not only as managers of human and physical resources but of meaning.

Regardless of the methods being used, addressing issues of quality in qualitative research involves three key considerations:

- Transparency over sampling decisions (including the specification of a population of interest)

- A clear chain of evidence using either cross-case tables or thick descriptions from informants

- A thorough description of the research process employed.

The resulting transparency allows readers to judge and assess the degree of confidence in the findings, and facilitates attempts to replicate data collection and analysis in another context.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

This review began with the concept of command as a calling, and reviewed the nature of command at sea as laid out by traditions, laws, and regulations. It presented various studies on Command experiences and discovered no one had taken a holistic view of command and the challenges of working with the 21st century security environment on Navy ships. It presented ideas on the key factors for command excellence and narrowed them down to presence, competence, vision that are captured by forehandedness, communication, credibility, and integrity. It reviewed the recorded experiences of COs from the 1970s, to the 1980s and the mid-1990s. Each of them pointed out potential challenges for those who would command. This study met the need for a qualitative inquiry to discover today's challenges to COs and ascertain how well prepared the COs since 2001 have been to meet those challenges. The study may help discover what ideas or mindsets could aid the development of future COs as they face the emerging challenges of the 21st century.



## **CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODS**

This qualitative case study sought to discover how recent COs of Navy Surface Combatants described their experiences of meeting the challenges of command and to learn how they measured their performance. This study may equip future researchers with measures to determine if the challenges have shifted, and help identify potential causes based on professional, social, cultural, or generational factors. Following an exploratory qualitative inquiry approach, this case study analyzed interviews of a number of naval officers who served as commanding officers of cruiser-destroyer ships in the first decade of the 21st century to discover their perceptions and feelings of the challenges they faced while in command.

### **Central Research Question**

How do former U. S. Navy cruiser-destroyer force commanding officers of the 21st century describe how they met the challenges of command at sea?

- What challenges did COs anticipate they would face in their tour in command at sea and what prepared COs to address these challenges?
- What new challenges occurred and how did the preparation help COs meet the new challenges?
- What factors did COs use to judge their success in command?
- What advice would COs offer for those desiring to command at sea?

Appendix G demonstrates the alignment among the problem, purpose, research question(s), and choice of research design.

### **Research Design**

The research design followed an explanatory qualitative approach through case studies in command. This research adhered to the fundamentals of good science. The study sought to learn what is known and what may be unknown about the challenges of command at sea through analyzing reports from recent commanding officers.

### **A Qualitative Methodology**

Given the highly personal and often individualistic nuances of leadership, a qualitative inquiry case study research design enabled a more powerful insight into the minds and thoughts of actual ship's COs. Qualitative inquiry case studies allowed one to explore the complexities of leadership and discover notions that are still unexplored and investigate the processes COs employed to adapt to the changing circumstances and demands of command (Lincoln & Guba, 1984). Despite its power and contribution to the body of scientific knowledge, the experimental design is just one tool of many that has potential to unlock the mysteries of relationships and events. The fact that quantitative researchers cannot always achieve their own ideals for control over variables, offers further support for qualitative case study methods for the study of leadership (Lincoln & Guba, 2003). A laboratory experiment on Command, despite valiant effort, could not possibly control completely for all "noise" variables or "plausible alternative hypotheses" according to Yin (1994, p. ix). Most experiments risk the loss of the vibrancy and disorderly imperfection of real world events, the most likely source of change.

## **The Process**

Qualitative research must still adhere to fundamental processes to appear credible and serve to springboard further advances in understanding the phenomena. Many times, the authors' own words or descriptive phrases can convey a sense of the participants, the environment, or the researcher's experience, the much sought *verstehen*. This project planned to use interviews with former commanding officers as the main data input for analysis against a backdrop of understanding the environment of change and conditions under which participants executed command at sea (Nuttall, Shankar, & Beverland, 2011).

Qualitative research strives for a deep, often contextual, emotional understanding of people's motivations and desires. "Thick description" (Barusch, Gringeri, & George, 2011) characterizes qualitative reports which often employ rich, direct quotes with well-developed interpretations to present in depth concepts and constructs vital to the study. Eisner (2003) noted that researchers' use of "evocative language" to build the thick description become the means through which the describer attempts to help a reader or listener gain a sense of participation and secure an image of and feel for the situation or qualities being described. The more evocation is engendered through language, the closer the description comes to being an art form. According to Nuttall, Shankar, and Beverland (2011), qualitative research assumes that people do not always act in accordance with the principles of rational self-interest. As such, people do not always know why they behave in the ways that they do. Thus, for this reason, researchers require methods that enable them to make sense of their participants' experiences.

## **The Context**

Qualitative research must adhere to the context. The overarching aim is to understand the unique meanings and significance of phenomena as experienced by the participants (Smith, Bekker, & Cheater, 2011). Gordon and Yukl (2004) concluded that organizations today are dramatically different from organizations fifty years ago. It seemed so with the Navy and ship command. After reviewing the literature on command at sea and potential generational impacts due to shifting demographics, societal or economic drivers, the study was prepared to gather recollections and artifacts from former commanding officers. The researcher gathered data by interviewing various commanding to discover how different ages interpreted the preparation, drive, and process for command at sea (Alvesson, 1996). Topics generated for exploration included their biggest challenges, surprises, and their sense of achievement across four areas: preparation, operations, people development, and the information explosion. The researcher collected data collected through semi-structured interviews (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006) of former commanding officers and carefully recorded the contexts in which they commanded, and COs' descriptions of their challenges of command (Atherton & Elsnore, 2007).

## **Population/Sample**

In step with guidance from Creswell (2009), Mason (2010), and Yin (2010), the initial target sample size was fifteen former ships COs, as modified by constraints of saturation, costs, or time. Recruitment was coordinated using the Surface Navy Association to advertise the study in its newsletter. Research through back issues of

*Surface Warfare* provided an initial list of former commanding officers that were contacted individually and directly, most through email. The formal letter was sent to confirm participation and scheduled an appropriate time and date for the interview. The community among SWOs is small enough so that once announced; word of the study spread quickly. Although the initial sample size was targeted at 15, most researchers generally use saturation as a guiding principle during their data collection. Saturation is achievable based on the experience and skill of the researcher.

### **Setting**

The interviews were conducted in office spaces or in private homes selected to avoid distractions and to allow ease of access. The first choice was for “home games” so the participants could be comfortable and feel safe in their day-to-day environment. Most had been away from command for several years, and many from the Navy. In the interviews, participants were asked to hearken back to the time when they were in command. Studying the recollections and feelings of their challenges and successes will aid future generations of officers preparing and chosen for command.

### **Instrumentation/ Measures**

The interview questions followed the participants’ paths to command and their descriptions of their command experience. The questions were:

1. When did you first know that you wanted to or could Command/fight a warship (event, person, experience, dream, etc.)?
2. Discuss your path to command: key people, key events, and motivation.

- a. What barriers did you face and what did you do to overcome/minimize them in your path to Command?
  - b. Did you think you were well prepared for Command and what specifically could have been done to better prepare you for your tour?
3. Compare your command experience with what you expected based on your observations of previous COs or other factors that influenced your conclusions—e.g., anecdotes, hearsay, research, metrics or measures, etc. Include where in the Deployment/ F RTP cycle you began and ended your tour—e.g., in yard, in work ups, or on deployment.
4. Since *Cole*/ 9-11 /War on Terrorism implementation, what Navy-wide or Surface Navy specific policies and/or procedures have been implemented that have influenced your ability to command effectively, either negatively or positively?
5. What ways have the changes in the operational and environmental expectations shifted the nature of challenges faced in Command? How could we measure them?
6. What parameters did you note to assess your performance in command? How did you drive your confidence in Command?
7. Would you be willing to share any artifacts (Command Philosophies, Letters from Command, etc.) to enable me to do cross-comparisons with others' like products, including my own?
8. What is the one thing about your experience as a Commanding Officer you would tell:

- a. A room of Department Heads about Command at sea?
  - b. Prospective Executive Officers?
  - c. Prospective Commanding Officers?
9. Make some drawings or graphs representative of:
- a. The challenges you faced versus your early CO.
  - b. The ship's employment during your Command tour against the nominal 27-month Schedule
  - c. Your assessment of ship's performance over your time in command.

Sample questions for follow-up included:

- How did you view/ relate/ try to influence junior officers?
- How did you view the JO-DH-XO from your various perspectives and how did your impressions change over your career?
- What ways existed for you to “get in trouble?”
- What kept you out of trouble in command?

Some discriminating data were the CO's commissioning source, actual sea experiences and ship types, shore tours, attendance at Joint Professional Military Education, advanced education, and whether the CO served in a Headquarters, Bureau of Personnel, or Teaching assignment.

### **Field Test**

The committee reviewed the proposed questions and assessed their positive value to construct or content validity. To prove the interview process, a field test was conducted by submitting the proposed questions via email to a group of retired naval

officers with significant command and Navy experience. Each provided insights on the relevancy and clarity of the questions and agreed that they could be answered in the timeframe allowed and would serve to elicit the desired information. Appendices E through H present amplification of field test participants, the initial version, and the modified Interview protocol.

### **Data Collection**

Researchers must have good questions. To be able to ask those questions and make the discoveries, researchers must practice good interview protocols. In interviewing, Knapik (2006) maintained the idea was to create social conditions in which participants feel free to bring forth their meaningful concerns, not become driven by the researcher's own viewpoint. In seeking to discover insights, researchers should adopt a learner perspective. Good interviews orient to the object or phenomenon of interest in a world shared by the researcher as well as the participant. Rabionet (2011) noted that interview protocol consisted of two important components: introductions and well-prepared questions. The introductory protocol should include statements of confidentiality, consent, options to withdraw, and use and scope of the results. According to Agee (2009), good qualitative questions should invite a process of exploration and discovery. Good research questions are answerable. A question needs to move the researcher toward discovering what is happening in a *particular* situation with a *particular* person or group. The process of qualitative case study inquiry should encourage the possibilities for questioning personal theories or for expanding or modifying the original conceptual framework and research questions. Agee (2009)

cautioned researchers to remain aware that developing good research questions requires understanding that inquiries into other people's lives are *always* an exercise in ethics.

Data collection was conducted through a series of interviews and further investigations to find deeper questions to explore the meanings associated with the various responses to questions about their experiences in command (Alvesson, 2003; Atherton & Elsnore, 2007). From observations of qualitative case studies, the transcribing of data and interviews is probably the one that requires the most concentrated effort to validate what the person said, what they meant to say, and what it means (Hoepfl, 1997). Participants were selected to reflect the many aspects of destroyer type ship COs based on timing, availability, and location.

By developing a semi-structured interview to pull out perceptions of challenges as related by COs, the study was able to explore how each former CO described the challenge of command. The interviews were recorded on video tape using a Sony minicam the researcher operated. Most interviews completed within the scheduled hour. The following data was recorded in the first minute of each tape:

- Date
- Place
- Interviewee
- Command
- Time frame
- Verbal agreement for being taped

Using video tape as the data capture method allowed full use of the aspects of the conversations, facial features, body language, intonation, feelings, and emotions.

Each interview was scheduled for an hour, with the caveat that the inquiry would be open-ended and allowed each participant time to consider and respond to the questions. Each interview was transcribed and sent to the participants for review and editing. Secondary data such as memos, command philosophies, and command paraphernalia were gathered in conjunction with the initial interview and during the validation process. Each tape and piece of evidence was annotated with date, time, and member ID assigned. Confidentiality was maintained. Each person's record was recorded as CO1, CO2, etc. Special Permission to use and quote for some items was granted. Accuracy of the data will be maintained by keeping the video tapes and transcripts together and sealed for seven years.

### **Data Analysis**

Creswell (2009) stressed that qualitative researchers follow a process that moves from the specific to the general through multiple levels of analysis:

- Organize and prepare data for analysis.
- Read through all the data.
- Begin a detailed analysis with a coding process. Segmenting the data, often using participants' own terms (*in vivo*).
- Use the coding process to generate a description of the people and their setting as well as identify themes or categories for analysis.
- Advance how the themes will be represented during the narrative.
- Make an interpretation of the meaning of the data.

The process was applied after the first interview to discover any modifications to the interview protocol and procedures. The analysis included practices of epoché and bracketing in step with procedures outlines by Bednall (2008).

Thematic analysis is one method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes the data set in rich detail (Buetow, 2010; Braun and Clarke, 2006). Potential pitfalls of thematic analysis include failure to analyze the data, use of questions as the themes, weak or unconvincing analysis, and mismatches either between data and claims, or between theory and claims (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **Coding Structure and Preconceived Themes**

An initial coding structure was created based on the research questions and potential challenges uncovered during the review of the literature. Initial themes include the paths to command, the challenges, the CO's mitigation strategies, and the methods to analyze results of the CO's response to challenges. The ship type, the positions, the various events, and the OPTEMPO can classify the path COs experienced. Challenges can be classified by their source, the timing (e.g., early in tour, end of tour, etc.) and the sense of urgency. The source of each challenge could be from at least three categories: operations, people, or policy/program changes. The mitigation strategies could be based on preparation or newly invented practices, or even by problems ignored. Assessing command performance could yield the measures employed by each commander, their results against those measures, and what happened next in their careers or the lives of the ships.

Additional ideas for themes to be uncovered included concepts of progression to command, metamorphosis effect of command, feedback to improve the selection, preparation, and grooming process, and best practices for execution in command. The coding structure continued to develop as the data was analyzed. Weston, Gandell, Beauchamp, McAlpine, Wiseman, and Beauchamp (2001) described a methodology for code development that will serve as the basis for the coding structure. Three factors, the code, the definition, and key words or phrases made up the Code Table. Table 1 contains the Initial Coding Table.

Table 1. *Initial Coding Table*

Level 1	Level 2	Code	Notes
Personal		P	Personal includes attributes, traits, background, etc.
	Motivation	PM	Observation, examples,
	Goal	PG	Clarified
	Presence	PP	How CO stayed focus
Path		Pa	Path includes career track until command
	Preparation	PaP	Standard–or not–SWO stops
	JO Experiences	PaE	Ships, Jobs, Deployments, relationships
	Key People	PaKP	CO, XO, DHs, peers, others, CPOs
	Key Events	PaKE	Inspections, Exercises, emergencies
Challenges		Ch	Challenges include classification
	Operations	ChO	What was happening to get ship ready? How did ship respond?
	Policy/ Programs	ChPP	What Navy wide directive affected your Sailors lives–positive or negative?
	People	ChP	Who were the key people in Command and on your path?
	Effect on JO's	CHE	What reactions can you recall of JOs (including yours)
Mitigation		M	Mitigation will match challenges
	Preps and Plans	MPP	How did you set priorities
	Practice	MP	How did you plan and execute
Results		R	
	Measures	RM	What things did you notice/ track to know you were getting close

## **Ideas for Analysis**

The advances in intelligent word processors enabled the application of computer programs to aid in evaluating data. Atherton and Elsnore (2007) noted that computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) can add value, but the amount depends on the user and the purpose of the research. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that writing should be an integral part of analysis and conducted from the beginning, not something that takes place at the end. Chenail and Chenail (2011) recommended that the report follow Grice's *Conversational Maxims*.

Analysis of qualitative data can be conducted through a series of methods from direct interpretation, thematic, within case analysis, and thematic synthesis (cross case analysis). In direct interpretation, the researcher looked for single instances that represent the themes. The search for meaning and the search for patterns began from the first codes based on the research questions and anticipated answers (Stake, 1995; Klenke, 2008). In categorical aggregation, the researcher sought a collection of incidents from the data. Following those three levels of analysis on a case-by-case basis, the study included Thematic Synthesis or Cross-case Analysis to understand the implications of findings across the informants.

## **Validity and Reliability**

This research was designed to meet quality standards of reliability, validity, and objectivity. Reliability means that the method has been recorded clearly and accurately and allows others to follow the same path. Reliability, in qualitative case study research, "allows the inferences from a particular study to be accepted as more than just the

opinions or observations of a single researcher” (Bachiochi & Weiner, 2002, p. 177).

Validity in qualitative research is more an ongoing and unfolding process as opposed to a static goal. Validity means that the findings generate meaning to meet the purpose of the research. Objectivity, in qualitative research, means that the researcher has taken efforts to state clearly any bias or prejudices, and has engaged in transparent selection, gathering, and analysis of the data. It strives to remove the idea that findings are simply well expressed opinions of the researcher. Some suggest following general principles to replace internal validity with *credibility* (authentic representations); external validity with *transferability* (extent of applicability); reliability with *dependability* (minimization of researcher idiosyncrasies); and objectivity with *confirmability* (researcher self-criticism).

Johnson, Buehring, Cassell, and Symon (2006) developed a methodology to set evaluation criteria for qualitative management research. Their categories for Modes of Engagement included positivism, neo-empiricism, critical theory, and affirmative post-modernism. This study’s approach falls within their “Neo-empiricist” approach since it is a qualitative case study inquiry focused on *verstehen*. Their suggested criteria, displayed in Table 2, are to employ “internally reflexive audit trails to demonstrate credibility, dependability, confirmability, and ecological validity; and transferability/ logical inference” (Johnson, et al., 2006, p. 138-139). Researchers should allow audiences to judge for themselves as to the rigor described.

Table 2. *Research Evaluation Criteria*

Modes of engagement	Underlying Philosophical assumptions	Research aims	Methodological commitments	Evaluation criteria for assessing management research
Neo-empiricism	Real and intersubjective worlds which science can neutrally represent and explain.	Discovery of the inter-subjective to describe and explain human action in and around organizations.	<i>Verstehen</i> to inductively describe and explain patterns of actors' intersubjective meanings—sometimes contextualized by pluralistic quasi-causal accounts.	Internally reflexive audit trails to demonstrate credibility, dependability, confirmability, and ecological validity; transferability/ logical inference.

*Note:* Table based on Table 2 in Johnson, Buehring, Cassell, & Symon (2006), p. 147.

### **Reliability**

Reliability is concerned with measurement error. Open disclosure of literature based precedents, clearly stated research questions that link logically with research design, and detailed descriptions of procedures aid in the study's potential for replication and so promote reliability (Yin, 1994). According to Trochim (2006), some qualitative researchers reject the framework of validity commonly accepted in more quantitative research in social sciences. They reject the basic realist assumption of a reality external to our perception of it. Although not rejecting the realist perspective, the four characteristics for judging qualitative research will be credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Eisner (2003) noted all studies need to present coherence, consensus, and possess instrumental utility. In discussing standards of quality for qualitative research, Eisner acknowledged that the qualitative method represented a

viable and distinctive paradigm. To maintain its integrity and unique utilities, qualitative researchers must cultivate and follow rules or standards directly applicable to this method rather than tolerating criticism based on standards developed for and by adherents of the quantitative paradigm.

## **Validity**

Validity delves to the heart of the question of defining well-executed and accurate work in qualitative research. Clear traceability of thoughts and excellent records add to reviewers' estimates of the trustworthiness of the data and the accuracy of findings. Since the validity of qualitative research centers on credibility and accuracy of the interpretations of participants' disclosed records, researchers must clearly link findings to the issues of participants' perspectives and understandings of events of which they have been a part. Validity has many forms such as construct, internal, and external validity. Construct validity ensures the research is constructed around the central issue. Internal validity addresses concerns about accuracy of inference or conclusively demonstrates that explanations of findings are accurate and not due to unaccounted for or extraneous variables. External validity involves the scope or span of area or events to which findings may be generalized. It is possible for findings based even on a singular case study to produce ideas applicable to situations beyond the studied sample (Yin, 1994).

The finding making must consider how various perspectives could interpret the data, rather than looking at it from just one side. This concept is crucial to understanding Command, sometimes more exists to the situation than what the CO knows. This study has met all elements discussed for reliability, validity, and objectivity.

## **Threats**

The threat from the researcher comes from an inability to separate oneself from the problem, even with full disclosure and good intentions. Alvesson (2003) warned that some would see the combined effect of the researcher and the setting could generate different responses than what actually happened in the time one spent in Command. We do want to know what the former CO did think and does say about the challenge of Command. An early idea for generating discourse was to employ cartoons that reflected happenings during shipboard life as the starting point for the interview. After reflecting on their use and reviewing the literature, the researcher employed an interview guide and showed the cartoons near the end of the discussion rather than using them as a starting point. A researcher trained more in psychology or psychiatry could employ these illustrations in a study of tracking considerations based on reflections started from the impetus of viewing the cartoon.

## **Tools to Raise Validity and Reliability**

Researchers must remain ethical and transparent throughout. Many of these processes center on strengthening credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1984). An audit trail is one technique for developing confirmability in qualitative research and assures the researcher thoughtfully applies relevant criteria throughout the research effort (Barusch, Gringeri, & George, 2011, Carcary, 2009). The audit trail records the steps taken in the process of the research project from start to finish and describes the decisions made along the way to illuminate and detail the selected course of action (Barusch, et al. 2011). Memos to record when certain views arose or changed add insight into the researcher's method and enhance reflectivity. Ruona in Swanson and Holton (2005) added that these

memos should be receptacles for the researcher's learning, musings, biases, hunches, speculations, puzzling, and so forth" (p. 235). Some internal steps to raise credibility include prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, and member checking. Triangulation originally referred to collecting data from multiple sources, but now may include multiple data sets, different methods, additional analysts, or theories. Using interviews, video recordings, documents, and observation as data sources in one study can strengthen its credibility and resonance (Lincoln & Guba, 1984). This study obtained artifacts volunteered by the participants.

The field test raised the quality and precision of the initial interview questions. According to Chenail and Chenail (2011), following a conversational flow will add transparency and raise credibility of the reported research. Employing video recordings allowed data to be revisited and crosschecked for analysis and comparisons.

According to Fielding (2000), the use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) enhances and bolsters the "trustworthiness" of qualitative research. Lee and Esterhuizen (2000) noted that the use of CAQDAS had become "socially acceptable among qualitative researchers" (p. 232). Atherton and Elsnore (2007) agreed to disagree on the issue. This construal of validity in qualitative research as an estimation of trustworthiness and authenticity echoes the observations of Lincoln and Guba (1986) who argued for the strengths of the paradigm as a valuable and standalone mechanism of inquiry rather than as subordinate to the qualitative methods.

### **Objectivity: Reflexivity, Bracketing, and Epoché**

Objectivity in qualitative research involves its ability to portray events and processes accurately with intensity of contextual detail and from the *emic* or insider's

perspective and reality base. Because of immersion, the qualitative researcher must carefully examine and disclose aspects of their personal philosophies and backgrounds that could bias the interpretive process or limit applicability of results (Lincoln & Guba, 2003). The ability to take responsibility or ownership of perspectives constitutes reflexivity.

Additionally, techniques of bracketing and epoché enhance the credibility of qualitative research (Bednall, 2006; Gearing, 2004). Epoché, a Greek term meaning “suspended belief,” is a “habit of thinking which continues throughout the pre-empirical and post-empirical phases of the study. Bracketing is an event, the moment of an interpretative fusion and the emergence of the conclusion” (p. 128). Epoché, accordingly, allows for empathy and connection, not elimination, replacement or substitution of perceived researcher bias. Bracketing advances that process by “facilitating recognition of the essence of meaning of the phenomenon under scrutiny” (Bednall, 2006, p. 127). Epoché follows throughout the study and is applied in analysis as the researcher attempts to pull out of making inferences or judgments until the data is collected. Bracketing is a process for analyzing and grouping common themes. Several initial themes were extracted from the literature to assemble the first coding table.

Gearing (2004) noted that bracketing takes place in three phases: “(a) abstract formulation, (b) research praxis, and (c) reintegration” (Gearing, 2004, p. 1432). The researcher’s background and “theoretical orientation, questions, focus, and emphasis” (p. 1432) drive the type of bracketing imposed on the data. Gearing’s typology included “ideal (philosophic) bracketing, descriptive (eidetic) bracketing, existential bracketing,

analytical bracketing, reflexive (cultural) bracketing, and pragmatic bracketing” (p. 1435).

### **Ethical Considerations**

The researcher considered all facets of maintaining an ethical foundation and adhering to the guidelines of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice as described in *The Belmont Report*. The research was conducted with respect for individuals as persons. Each participant was provided with the purpose and information about the study and allowed to withdraw at any time. Their participation began with recruitment and acknowledgment of informed consent. Since all potential participants were volunteers and had completed their command tours, and most were out of the service, very little or no risk to persons was expected. As professional naval officers, most understood the benefit to the next generations serving as ships’ Commanders and *more than capable* mariners. Participants were selected in conformance with principle of justice. To limit expenses, participants were recruited through professional contacts and networks.

### **Qualities of the Researcher**

All scientific inquiries must adhere to specific procedures to collect and analyze the data. For a qualitative case study, the assembly begins with the researcher’s self-analysis to describe the manner in which objectivity can be maintained throughout the study. This self-discovery process allows the researcher to recognize and declare any bias or preconceived subjectivity (Watt, 2007). Ruona in Swanson and Holton (2005) discussed the importance of the researcher serving as a “bricoleur” (p. 235) who pieces together the collected data from memos, test results, interviews, interpretations, and

feelings to assemble a set of patterns to represent the complexities of the situation. Further, qualitative data analysis is a process that involves sensing themes, making constant comparison, seeking recursiveness, thinking inductively and deductively, and generating meaning by interpretation of the data. Creswell (2009) noted that the researcher is the “key instrument” by “collecting data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, or interviewing participants” (Creswell, 2009, p. 175). The focus should be on the meaning of the informants, not on any of the researcher’s preconceptions. Creswell noted that sometimes “the study may be organized around the social, political, or historical context” (p. 176). This study’s goal will be to provide a holistic picture of destroyer command in the 21st century and its changing challenges.

Qualitative researchers must be able to observe without intervening and allow “normal” behaviors and thoughts to emerge in the course of the interaction between researchers and the participants. Researchers are empowered to make autonomous choices of the appropriate strategies for the research context and questions. Moreover, researchers must understand that the act of doing research carries with it ethical obligations to be accountable and transparent about those choices (Barusch, Gringeri, & George, 2011). A standard procedure employed in Naval nuclear propulsion excellence was the conduct of a monitor watch. A senior, more experienced observer would spend some time observing routine operations to note adherence to procedural compliance and formal communication practices without any intervention except for reactor safety concerns. An interesting lesson from those watches was that those being monitored would begin with a great sense of care and concern to show they were performing as

expected. However, the longer the monitor was on station, the watchteam, even under observation, would return to business as usual.

Trochim (2006) mentioned that researchers who possess direct experience with the phenomenon under investigation were more likely to develop deeper understanding and meaning from the participants' stories. Barusch, Gringeri, and George (2011) noted the importance for researchers to remember "positionality" (p. 12), or the special viewpoint of the researcher, acknowledge the role of community in research, and encourage the "voice, reflexivity, reciprocity, and fluidity" (p. 12) between researcher and researched. Above all, the effort should allow participants and researcher to be co-equal contributors to the results.

### **Chapter Summary**

This study adds to the knowledge base of leadership studies of command by discovering how recent COs described the challenge of command at sea and how well they were prepared to meet it. The research validated longstanding practices for judging command success and uncovered new ideas for measuring success in Command. This study should be employed as a precursor to an appreciative inquiry on Command to follow the method of "discover, dream, design, destiny" in accordance with Bright, Cooperrider, and Galloway (2006). Allen (2006) declared that qualitative inquiry with case studies was uniquely suited to face the challenge of studying the multifaceted relationships and propositions suggested by the many and interrelated factors that contribute to leadership and to failed moral decision making in leaders. An action research program could begin to follow commanding officers throughout their tours to

gain a deeper of understanding of the challenges they face and their methods of meeting them.

## **CHAPTER 4. RESULTS**

This study employed qualitative methods to discover how recent Commanding Officer's (COs) of Navy combatant ships described their motivations, paths, and experiences in command. Additionally, the interviews sought to have each CO articulate their challenges and describe how they met them, and offered each an opportunity to advise those who would follow on the concept and execution of command. This section presents the results of the recruiting and interview process, describes the participants, and presents the respondents' answers to the interview questions.

### **The Study and the Researcher**

The interest in command at sea stems from the researcher's naval career and follow-on employment supporting the Fleet. With a rash of failed COs, he wanted to explore the quality, preparation, and execution of command at sea and begin to understand how the Navy is preparing future generations for the challenges. Leaders develop other leaders; the Army's method is known as the "Long Grey Line." Navy ships' COs stimulate, encourage, and develop future COs. The researcher's motivation was to discover how recently served Navy ship commanding officers described their paths to command, illustrated their challenges and how they met them, and expressed their advice to those who would follow in their footsteps to Command at sea.

As a former CO, the researcher understands the nature and responsibility of command at sea, and designed the interviews to allow COs to discuss their concerns and

successes in command. Each interview was arranged independently, and conducted separately. No one participant knew of the participation of more than one or two of the other informants. The researcher's experience in command, and status now as a retired officer, allowed informants to feel comfortable while candidly discussing their experiences. Although maintaining perfect objectivity was tough, the researcher did acknowledge when later informants' answers mirrored the themes already identified. All participants agreed that they enjoyed discussing and reliving their command experiences.

### **Description of the Sample**

Primary informants were former commanding officers of Navy combatant ships who had successfully completed command between 2000 and 2012. No current COs participated. Appendix K presents Commanding Officer data on time in command. Appendix L presents Commanding Officer career data. Six commanded before the attack on USS *Cole* in October 2000 and then returned to command at a more senior level. All sixteen earned Master's degrees during their careers and thirteen had completed at least one phase of Joint Professional Military Education (JPME). Twelve served on Fleet or Immediate Superior in Command (ISIC) staffs, and six held instructor positions at the Surface Warfare Officers School (SWOS). Fifteen had completed a Joint assignment, including two who served as Individual Augmentees (IAs). Three had served at the Bureau of Naval Personnel. Nine had tours within the Beltway/ Washington, DC.

### **Discussion of the Sample**

The researcher tried to cover as diverse a group as possible, with racial minorities and women represented, and expanded the command at sea population to include COs of

Amphibious (AMPHIB) ships. The informant COs had commanded 30 different combatant ships from fleets on both coasts. All commanded at least once between 2000 and 2012; six had major ship (CG or large deck AMPHIB) command. After their command tours, three were directed to interim CO jobs following the early departure of those ship's COs; one of them got to do it twice.

### **Recruiting and Interview Process**

Recruiting participant candidates was easy. Many former commanding officers volunteered as soon as they found out about the study and its purpose. Finding mutually supportable times to schedule for interviews was much more difficult due to work schedules and availability of appropriate interview venues. Since the researcher videotaped all interviews, he narrowed the selection of participants to those volunteers from the local area. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews in a convenience sample of sixteen former ship commanding officers. The researcher turned away more than twice that number due to travel and time constraints.

### **Research Methodology Applied to Data Analysis**

Participants described their command experiences following the Interview Preparation Form/ Guide (Appendix J). The researcher provided selected *Broadside*<sup>®</sup> cartoons from Jeff Bacon that represented various experiences COs might face. Bacon was a career Navy man famous for his ability to capture routine experiences of Navy life. In a few images and captions, he allows naval officers to see themselves in a humorous light. The researcher planned for those illustrations to help break open the memory bank of command experiences along the structured questions. Several participants offered

detailed play-by-play analysis of their experiences when reminiscing based on those scenarios.

The researcher then asked the COs to draw three graphs or “pictures” representing their thoughts on comparing their level of challenge to how they perceived their first COs’ level of challenge; mapping their time in command against the 27-month nominal Surface combatant cycle of Maintenance, Basic, Integrated, Advanced, Testing, and Certification, Deployment, and return to Maintenance; and assessing their ship’s performance by tracking it through their time in command. The researcher did not specify a form and allowed respondents to construct pictures that represented their perceptions, experiences, and opinions. Appendix M contains summary of each CO’s responses to the interview questions, sample artifacts, and drawings.

### **Steps to improve validity**

The study employed four processes to raise the validity of the findings: validation, triangulation, member checking, and an audit trail. NVivo was employed to aide in tracking trends. The researcher had developed an Initial Coding Table (Table 1) to help classify anticipated issues. It consisted of two levels with seven themes, spread over fifteen descriptors. The researcher used a variety of tools such as Excel spreadsheets, and constant checking and grouping to cull out additional themes.

### **Presentation of Data and Results of Analysis**

The following section presents a compilation of the COs’ responses to the interview questions. In general, the questions allowed the respondents to reflect on their careers and times in command.

**When did you first know that you wanted to or could Command/fight a warship (event, person, experience, dream, etc.)?**

Most COs said they knew early in their careers they wanted to command. Experiencing early responsibilities and successes; viewing the Navy as a “meritocracy,” enjoying the spirit of a wardroom and ship “camaraderie,” observing examples of effective COs, and respecting family influences led to their decisions to seek command. Eventually, all sought, competed, and were selected for assignment to command.

Ship COs play a major role in shaping future ship COs. Thirteen of the COs named early experiences and examples of model COs for sparking their desire for command. Their minds were made up by the time they returned to sea for their department head tours. Six had known they wanted command as they left their first ships. Three of those were Navy juniors or experienced sailors/ watermen while growing up. Several recalled an incident where an early CO assessed them as “cut out” for command. All sixteen COs reflected on applying lessons from the examples set by their COs, both good and bad. COs hoped either to emulate them someday or one day, make up for a poor CO when they achieved Command. CO2 reported he served on a “special ship under a special Captain.” The CO “enjoyed what he was doing and made us feel like we wanted to be that guy.” CO2 continued,

Many of the officers of that wardroom stay close... and significant numbers of the officers with whom I served stayed in for command, and several have been promoted to Admiral—including one who transferred to the Medical Corps. Amazing the influence of one Captain on a generation of officers.

All COs affirmed that the Surface Navy places a lot of early responsibility on its officers. Division officers not only are responsible for the care and upkeep of their assigned divisional workspaces and equipment, they are also responsible for the training,

qualification, and performance of their personnel. Moreover, each junior officer (JO) is on a continuous training, certification, and qualification path to Officer of the Deck (OOD) and Surface Warfare Officer (SWO), and a number of other watchstations and collateral duty assignments. As an example, by the time these officers were SWO qualified Lieutenants, about their four year point from commissioning, CO1 had served as the Officer-in-Charge (OIC) of a Landing Craft- Air Cushioned (LCAC) Detachment off Somalia, CO15 was the lead maintenance officer and a sailing instructor at the Academy; and CO16 had completed 50 transits of the Strait of Hormuz as a Bridge watch officer. This early responsibility reflected some inkling of what their lives could be like in command.

The Navy is also a meritocracy, and one measure of career success for SWOs is to command a ship. The concept of being in command grows on officers who serve on Navy ships. Several COs indicated they had no defining “lightning bolt” (CO12) or “aha” (CO10) moment; but their command desire, ignited by their service and accomplishments, grew to motivate them to seek command. Half of the COs (CO1, CO2, CO6, CO7, CO13, CO14, CO15, CO16) did provide the specific event or incident when they made command a career goal. For CO6, it was observing how squared away another ship looked, for CO13, it was understanding the level of trust his CO placed in him. SWOs drive ships. JOs are usually the ones with the CONN, giving the orders to steer the ship and control routine operations. “Having the CONN, and earning the trust of the CO, yield powerful feelings of accomplishment” (CO8, CO10, CO14, CO16). All CO’s Night Orders use the same phrase on defining the parameters on when to call the Captain: “When in doubt...” Several COs told stories of how applying that principle worked for

them as JOs, and a few related when not applying that principle caused serious consequences.

Reflecting on what a squared away ship looked like, at least three used "the power of a good commander" (CO1, CO6, CO16) to describe how they got excited to command. Several felt a "Green light" to go for early command based on a boost from their CO in a Fitrep comment or word of career advice. Naval Academy graduates were more likely to mention the education and influence on a life of service; "It was drummed into you" was the way CO15 put it. But always officers tied that theme of duty to their actual experiences working on early ships and the high quality of other officers, chiefs, and sailors who make ships work. CO11 confessed that he was in his Second department head tour before "the lights came on," but he applied and was accepted for MHC command. CO9 admitted not thinking about Command until he did not screen following his department head tours. CO3, CO4, CO7, CO12, and CO16 talked about growing up "Navy." Ships can reflect Family values and these officers followed the footsteps of their fathers in service.

All officers developed an improved sense of self in the refining process of SWO qualification and conducting the daily business of the ship. Most confessed a deep commitment in their love of the ship and the people who serve in them. CO4 noted, "I felt like my job in command was to shield the three hundred folks inside the lifelines from those who would make their lives miserable." CO15 noted his "main challenge on the PC was being as good of a CO as the crew deserved." CO11 made "unusual respect" a cornerstone of his command philosophy.

**Discuss your path to command: Key people, key events, and motivation.**

All COs followed individualized versions of the SWO plan. Five were nuclear-trained, termed “SWO-Ns,” who went to nuclear power school during their first few years, some before and others following, a tour on their first ship. They would serve on CVNs and the last remaining CGNs. All officers assigned to their first ships become SWO candidates. COs reflected on their tours as junior officers immersed in continuous learning environments and tested in meeting challenges daily. COs demonstrated that officers develop adaptability, versatility, and resiliency in the course of rotating and varied assignments. Each officer begins to understand how much personal involvement must be committed to excellence: their own and others. Accompanied by a sense of accomplishment along with some disappointments to temper success, professional competence and self-efficacy begin to emerge from the first-hand experiences of these challenges. Eventual selection for command rides on the mantra discussed by Winnefeld (2004) “Sustained superior performance” coupled with luck and timing of selection. Several admitted that on their last look a member on the board knew of the special circumstances of their situation. An old adage exclaims, “It’s not always what you know, but who you know.” Officers selected for command must have knowledge, performance, and great timing.

Most COs named an early CO in their enumeration of key people, and most of the CO’s descriptions reflected the best qualities of professional naval officers. A few future COs experienced the worst of leadership examples, and subsequently became more dedicated to improving how the Navy was led. Most mentioned the importance of the Division Officer–Chief relationship in establishing their growing confidence in their

ability to command someday. Many COs spoke on the importance of having positive experiences with senior enlisted leaders and “crusty” Warrant Officers early helps turns Junior Officers into professional Naval Officers by removing a “fear factor” in relating to naval personnel who are more experienced, but termed “junior” to most officers. CO11 had an interesting twist to improve how people relate between the ranks. Calling for “unusual respect,” he employed a concept of an upside down pyramid—actually a spinning top, with the CO on the bottom with all responsibility resting on him. His job was to support those above him. As each layer of the chain of command was filled in, the terms “above and below” were replaced by “senior and junior.”

COs described key events that shaped a future CO’s development. Learning situations occurred during operations, preparing for inspections, learning at SWOS, and serving in their XO, Department Heads, or follow-on assignments. Opportunities to drive and maneuver their ships, especially experiencing unusual ship handling challenges, actually engaging in combat or near combat, and maintaining readiness set officers on paths to command. Navy inspections have continued, even in a dichotomous environment teetering between a peacetime and semi-warfighting footing. CO13 would later sketch the situation with a curve of challenges growing over time and a curve of resources and authority of COs shrinking.

Officers facing inspections learned to plan for success and anticipate challenges. Several COs described the inspections as beginning to take a roller coaster like feeling of highs, lows, and surprising turns. As CO16 described, “From never feeling you’re ready, or ready enough, to realizing you forgot some things and are hanging by a thread, to getting to the end and hearing the words ‘You passed’ from the Senior Inspector.” Every

passed hurdle adds to a ship's and crew's "self-efficacy." COs learn from these experiences and apply the principles in other areas of shipboard challenges. Serving on newly commissioned ships, going through initial trials and testing, and staying onboard through the first deployment gave some COs the chance to see what ships should look like when cleaned and carefully maintained. CO6, CO7, and CO8 had XO tours that allowed, even forced them to learn to command. CO6 began to appreciate how much else there was to know; CO7 learned how to seal the crew for thinking about combat; CO8 arrived at his XO ride and was met by the ship's CO with "I'm tired. You've got it. Let's succeed." They did.

COs in general faced no barriers, but some experienced slow screening for command and observed remnants of the slow change in Navy culture. COs 3, 9, and 12 overcame their lack of screening by adhering to time proven paths of accepting and performing well in extra tours at sea or other challenging assignments. CO12 noted, "I got to command by doing a lot of Sea Duty, and I had Service Force, AMPHB, and DD, CG, and afloat staff experience. I was as prepared as one can be." CO3 and CO9 served as Individual Augmentees (IAs).

A female CO experienced some indicators that not all naval officers were accepting of the policies making women eligible for command at sea.

I had joined the Navy when more opportunities were opening for women, but there were still some long held attitudes about women at sea. I served at SWOS DOC as an instructor in seamanship and navigation. I recall being told: 'You're only AF and LSD experienced' from a SWO LT. Then, I discovered when I got my Department Head orders that 'it's only a DD, not a DDG.' I realized I would never be 'good enough' for some people. That was a gauntlet I took up and it helped me set in my mind that I'll show you!

COs named one benefit of the transparency resulting from the explosion of information has resulted in the probability that wrong doing and often, wrong thinking, of some leaders can be discovered and exposed. CO11 noted:

The expectations for exemplary conduct of COs are no different... The speed of information with Facebook comms and the like, what we used to be able to control/ keep within the lifelines, has become public. This extra visibility and the media have affected the 'speed with which unknowing public expects us to 'do something.'

When some COs known for aggressive, even abusive behavior were discovered and relieved, formerly damning Fitness reports from those officers were discarded, and some officers, who had served under those poor COs, who were otherwise well qualified, later screened for command. "It is going to be tougher to avoid being exposed. "As CO3 noted:

A famous CO's reputation was generally known about the flaming personality, many superiors had chances to counsel/ correct; but no one did until the flame out. Additionally, I do not buy the idea that alcohol caused you to do this. Even drunk you have a good idea of what is right, and because you were drunk is no excuse for outrageous behavior.

Officers thought the competitive process for command was fair and transparent.

They all noted they were as prepared for command as they could be; but "You don't know what you don't know" (CO12 and CO13). CO15 adamantly exclaimed:

You can't know what it's like to command until you command. And even when you get there and think you've got it, you haven't arrived yet. SWOS does the best job it can preparing you, but you are still on your own.

**Compare your command experience with what you expected based on your observations of previous COs or other factors that influenced your conclusions, e.g., anecdotes, hearsay, research, metrics, or measures, etc.**

COs who commanded in the latter half of the decade thought their challenges in command were much harder than their first ships' COs. COs knew that these challenges

resulted from previous Flag level decisions to save dollars by reducing manning, training, maintenance, and developing programs designed to prevent personnel issues ranging from abusive behavior to willful misconduct. Coupled to these reductions, the pace of the schedule to meet 21st century warfighting preparations and demands had driven OPTEMPO above 57 days per quarter when deployed. The Fleet Readiness Plan (FRP) and the Fleet Response Training Plan (FRTP), in their efforts to make more ships available for operations, did not consider the effect of the pending reductions in manning, maintenance, and training and the additional wear and tear of the now more “productive” (i.e., “available”) ships. Some of those reductions caused some ships to develop victim mentalities and negative attitudes. These cultures seemed to spread as more demands were placed on fewer people and fewer support, though promised, never materialized. They worked to do the minimum that would keep them out of trouble. Few leaders would stand up and demand continued performance. CO1 again noted:

In the ten years since I had the PC, upper level leadership lost their confidence in their juniors. I also thought that from our level of leadership, we did not trust our commanders...My challenge was then: hold standards, meet goals, and deliver capability to the Navy.

If the decline of ship’s cultures were not enough, the information explosion brought new sets of problems.

**Manning.** Decisions made to lower the numbers and seniority of Sailors assigned to ships based on budget pressures and not mission requirements, coupled with increasing OPTEMPO and reduced funding for maintenance, had a significant effect on the challenges COs faced.

CO1 noted:

The system was pummeling ships and COs for their performance and materiel condition resulting from personnel and training policy decisions made years before in efforts to reduce costs and streamline the Navy. Driven by money savings initiatives, fewer people, less technical training for Sailors enroute to their ships, and reduced maintenance raised the challenges of command.

COs who commanded later in the decade faced dropping manpower to contend with rising workloads. Their ships remained the same size and as busy as ever.

Equipment ages as it operates. COs met these leadership tests to keep their people focused on mission, and balanced the management challenges to get work done, clean their ships, and sustain operational readiness. More responsibility was placed on individuals to perform.

**Training.** A Naval saying notes, “Training is the number one job of a ship in peacetime.” Each CO discussed the need to be involved in training, and personally demand folks learn and follow the standards in executing programs and operating the ship. Robinson (2008) had noted the decision to delete SWOSDOC implemented in 2003 was already being blamed for dropping junior officer professional performance and SWO retention. The Navy has begun a swing back to improved initial accession education of its future leaders in the Surface force. According to the recent memo from Admiral Harvey, help is also coming to provided better training for Sailors going into key maintenance and operating assignments at sea (Harvey, 2012).

**Maintenance support.** Cuts in funding of ship’s maintenance exacerbated by the reduction of numbers and levels of experience of ship’s crews allowed the basic maintenance and materiel conditions of ships to decline. CO15 illustrated the problem by showing a picture of him as a Lieutenant (LT) explaining to the Captain their older ship

that the needed part was only made by a company that went out of business before he was born. To show the current view, he showed his LT explaining that “They TYCOM won’t fund the part so I can’t get it out of the storeroom.” CO10 pegged the decision makers:

The cause of the funding crises was that there was no ‘revolt of the admirals’ to stem the tide as those budgets were going down. Many were too worried about their future rather than about what would be happening, and eventually did happen, on Navy’s ships. The ships lost their ability to assess themselves, shore support organizations were written out of existence, and schools dried up. All these combined to lower a ship’s self-identification ability. Every maintenance availability closed out with ‘Growth work’, much of which had been previously identified but deferred. The Navy wound up paying nearly double.

**Pace of Schedule: OPTEMPO/ FRP/ FRTP.** Operational Tempo (OPTEMPO) measures how busy a ship is based on the number of days at sea per quarter. The demand for Navy ships has remained steady, even increased during the decade. As the numbers of ships have gone down, the OPTEMPO ships to others, raising some ships’ OPTEMPO to over 55 days per quarter when deployed. OPTEMPO is great for training and qualifying sailors and officers in ship’s operations. It is bad since maintenance must be accomplished more often to keep the ship running well.

**Ship’s Cultures.** Ships possess reputations and develop internal cultures. Most ships teeter between a positive attitude that reflects a “Can do” spirit, and one that reflects Victim Mentality. Often, the internal culture established by early CO’s and crews sets the stage for years of excellence. However, ships suffer occasional hard knocks. A poor landing here, a minor collision there, and a failed, or worse yet, a series of failed inspections or a poor CO/XO/CMC team mark the trend toward a negative culture. Every inspection becomes a crisis and challenges grow since demonstrated performance is not meeting expectations. The downward spiral is vicious. A small group may complain about their mistreatment getting others to feel sorry for the situation. Usually

blaming others accelerates the mentality of “neglect,” which then self-justifies attitudes such as “we can do it whatever way we want (that seems to keep us out of trouble).”

CO5 recalled finding a subculture among the Mineforce as he took over his MCM Rotational Crew. He was told the Mineforce had their own way and “didn’t have to be as tough” as the destroyer Navy. CO10 and CO13 faced similar challenges as they relieved on their FFGs. Moreover, CO16 found he inherited what had once been a proud ship that now was broken physically and spiritually. Each CO found the way out of the doldrums of sorrow, falling performance, and complacency was a return to demanding all meet standards. CO1 employed the same concepts as he worked to restore the crew’s confidence in themselves and their PC following a collision and removal of a CO.

Some folks in leadership allowed these cuts to excuse the absence of holding people accountable to maintain standards of performance across the ship. Any reduction in support from above demands those on the deckplates step up, even when the TYCOM has failed to articulate its funding requirements. CO1 through CO16 offered how they worked to hold the standards and how hard they fought to regain the level, without funding or manning help. They did achieve the standards by focusing their efforts of their Sailors. Because they built pride through recognized performance, most of their ships reversed the decline even before Admiral Harvey’s promise to begin restoring manpower, maintenance, and training funding. Note that several COs refused to accept the lack of support for a reason they could lower their standards and expectations of their crews to meet what “good” performance and materiel readiness means.

**Culture Shifts.** Command is all about leading people to accomplish the mission. Watching their confidence grow through recognizing their achievements can lead to

performance higher than many would have dreamed they were capable. All COs told stories involving challenges with people, starting with their bosses. CO5, CO6, CO7, and CO14 discussed their puzzlement when their bosses, Commodores or CSG commanders, questioned their actions or ignored their suggestions for improving future operations. Several recall words from a TYCOM or superior which still sting. CO1 bluntly responded to his TYCOM when asked what he could have done better. CO14 recalled his TYCOM's response when he questioned the sagacity of the decision to reduce SWO Basic. CO15 related when the TYCOM publically admitted that he thought the ships and crews were wasting Navy assets. CO6 was aghast that near the end of his tour, after playing major roles in OIF, the TYCOM came on the ship and warned his wardroom to watch him carefully during his last month in command.

**Information Explosion.** In the past, COs were thankful when the ship got to sea since some of the tentacles of higher command were cut as the shore services were removed. However, advances in connectivity have presented new challenges. All COs noted the importance of staying informed and involved and assuaging the rising appetite of their seniors for more reports and information from happenings all over the ship. It has led to an expectation that COs have to know everything about everything, instantaneously. With the speed and accessibility of information, often a crisis situation on one ship becomes a Fleet wide issue.

CO5 noted the dilemma in which he found his TAO (Tactical Action Officer; Cutler & Cutler, 2005):

On my first ships, we received tasking by high precedence radio circuits or messages only. There has been a 'Rabbit-like proliferation' of Command and Control systems on ships. Now phones, email, take away the time and close the latitude for a CO to execute command. I recall that the CIC set up included so many computers for TAO to answer to stay engaged: 'Was anyone watching what was happening?' We need to find an appetite suppressant for this quest for instantaneous knowledge. Do we really need to know it all? Additionally, we are seeing more second-guessing from seniors due to ability to touch the ship.

CO12 noted other big challenge were the effects brought on by the rise of social media.

CO11 summed up the impact of the effect of the speed of information with Facebook and the like:

What we used to be able to control/ keep within the lifelines has become public. This extra visibility and the media have affected the speed with which unknowing public expects us to 'do something' ... The cultural difference of the current generation. They are tech savvy and expect to have access to a greater amount of information. We need to provide that. They are used to sharing and have not been exposed to many boundaries.

CO12 confessed to receiving "Friend" requests from former Sailors on Facebook.

The information explosion as CO3 noted only seemed to flow one-way:

In the middle of our deployment, we unfortunately found out that we were going to go again with only a six-month turnaround. Not the way you'd want to find out. We discovered that tidbit of bad news when the information was buried in the Partnership of the Americas (PoA) deployment message that assigned ships and Helo Dets. ... I had no idea that was happening... there was no top-level cover or warning... and there was no way to prevent release of that schedule from causing a negative effect on crew morale, and the word screaming back to the families.

CO9 defined an approach taken by many:

I thought my early COs had been allowed to command more than we were. There was no email. You could only get outside information from snail mail, message traffic, or the radio. Now, even when the ISIC is off the ship, there is a lot more tasking from many directions- ISIC, TYCOM, CLASSRON, etc. The bosses are micromanaging everything: checking your programs, training, Drug and Alcohol

Program Advisor, and constantly harping. No day went by without several emails from the staff tasking us for data that had to be reported immediately. I finally told my wardroom that no email from outside the ship could be answered without a four-hour delay to try to slow the pace.

The pall of micromanagement was explained by CO13:

Since I had been a Department Head, the number of people who thronged to see the ship multiplied. I tried to make sure I knew who they were and why they were there. In dealing with my seniors, there were a couple of times when I could tell the Commodore was probing for information on 'why' certain things happened the way he thought they did. When I was a Department Head, the message coming off the ship was managed better. Now a guy from the staff comes down for two seconds and reports something back to Commodore who immediately calls you up. We have less room to maneuver due to the many lines of comms.

In their efforts to help commanders with the perceived problem, those who are now in supervisory leadership positions have become tedious meddlers rather than helpful mentors. COs must muster all their courage to stay professional and as CO4 noted: "I felt like my job in command was to shield the three hundred folks inside the lifelines from those who would make their lives miserable." A question for future study would be "Who is thinking about the COs?"

**Since *Cole*/ 9-11/War on Terrorism implementation, what Navy-wide or Surface Navy specific policies and/or procedures have been implemented that have influenced your ability to command effectively, either negatively or positively?**

COs noted the decisions to reduce manning, funding, and maintenance, had negative effects beyond caring for the ship. New programs or enhancements to others began to compete for scarce resources of time and attention. Two that posed the most impact were Antiterrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP) and the Maritime Interception Operations centerpiece of "Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure" (VBSS). Each program demanded specially trained, qualified, and certified teams of approximately twenty Sailors each. Mission requirements and even rules of engagement differed depending on

what command the ship would be assigned to support. Advanced skills in boat operations, small unit tactics, and legal evidence handling had to be developed among the teams. CO 5 noted: “The new emphasis on programs such as AT/FP that required all hands to be proficient in weapons handling.” Many schools for these events took Sailors and some supervisors off the ship for days placing pressure on Duty sections and squeezing the flexibility of providing extra or backup personnel. CO2 described it thusly:

As for practices in Command before *Cole* and after, the major changes were the commitments to AT/FP and the ramp up to advanced VBSS. Those evolutions draw significant numbers of resources—i.e. Sailor time. Most ships sail with 18–24 VBSS members, and it takes 19 man-weeks to make just one fully qualified team member.

CO 3 noted:

Navy policies since 9/11 such as VBSS and Force Protection and fiscal policies have had tremendous effect on the challenges of command. Managing AT/FP and VBSS, you must have the right guy in charge.

**Programs to prevent...** COs acknowledged the importance of executing programs and not allowing anyone to fall out of attention for long. Admiral Harvey in his “Practices of Successful Commands” extolled the execution of programs and compared the orchestration to the timing and balance executed by a “plate spinner.” The participating CO’s admitted they could not succeed alone.

CO1 noted:

On the Monday of the first week following INSURV, at a meeting with the Admiral (COMNAVSURFLANT) and his council of Captains, I was shocked when the Admiral asked, ‘Captain, what could you have done better?’ I answered him ‘Nothing’

**Fundamentals.** Four main programs remained in the spotlight for COs: 3–M, Safety, Damage Control, and Training. COs had much to say about these programs when

executed as designed. Without well trained and disciplined leaders, any failure in these programs will prove disastrous in wartime and may exacerbate emergencies.

**3-M.** 3-M was designed to provide ships and applicable shore stations with a simple and standard means for planning, scheduling, controlling, and performing maintenance on all shipboard systems and equipment. 3-M's objective is to ensure maximum equipment and system operational readiness. Three integrated systems make 3-M work: PMS (Planned Maintenance System), Maintenance Data System (MDS), and Configuration Management System (CMS). PMS represents the "minimum" maintenance required for equipment to run to end of life.

CO7:

I viewed the challenges of command along lines of changes in expectations; we had different OPTEMPO and missions. Additionally, we faced reductions in funding and changes in budget programs. We also made some cuts that reduced basic PMS practices. We couldn't fix many systems since folks didn't get advanced training.

CO9:

Our daily focus must be on learning and improving the operational readiness of this command. From repair efforts, to PMS, to training, everything we do impacts it. Equipment, personnel, and tactical readiness changes on a daily basis, it is up to us to know when and why.

CO10:

We took a program a week, looked through all Divisions and the ship, and came back in six months. As we executed PMS spot checks, I also decoupled zone inspection from DITS. They were 'Random- short notice' to prevent the 'pain exs' that had preceded past Zone Inspections.

CO13:

As a DIVO, I felt capable in PMS and had a CPO/WCS to help me. But now, no CPOs have the knowledge or understanding of PMS to pass it to their JOs. On some ships, only the COs actually remember how to make the system work!

**Safety.** The Naval Safety Program assists ships in maintaining safe working environments and reducing the number of work related incidents, as well as publicizing personal safety practices. COs stress “Safety” and employ “ORM” (Operational Risk Management) to ensure mission accomplishment while mitigating the risks to people and equipment. CO3’s Command philosophy focused on four key issues “Safety, Training, Fun, and Family.” CO4 noted, “Both ships won the Battle E and the Ship’s Safety award.”

CO5 related in his log:

D-155: Along with XO and Weps, counseled ENS *Chuck Smith* about his UNSAT performance as Helm Safety officer during today’s UNREP.... Two individuals informed me he distracted the Helmsman and walked away from his station. Not a good start for him.

CO6’s philosophy included “Cleanliness, Safety, and Battle Readiness.”

**DC (Damage Control).** Damage control is a function all assigned to any crew in the Navy must be prepared to execute. Every sailor practices to gain the ability to prevent casualties, respond to emergencies, and provide immediate aid.

CO7: “*Cole* taught us we are at our best U/W (underway) and brought home the value of Damage Control.”

**Training: Personal Qualification System (PQS), Team Qualification, and Certifications.** CO’s play a major role in selecting, training, and qualifying key watchstanders throughout the ship. The ship’s safety and the CO’s career may ride on decisions the watchstanders make before the CO ever gets “a vote.”

CO2 advised future XOs, Training: Lead the Ship’s Training Efforts across all elements- DC, 3M, Advancement, and Warfighting. CO5 advised:

Get/ keep your CPOs engaged. The last few years CPOs seem more complacent; get your chiefs involved. They must train the E5/E6 who haven't had some benefits of the early education and training. Use them to help train your officers.

CO13 astutely remarked:

COs now must be much more reliant on themselves to figure out what's going on because their senior ship leaders don't have the experience to project the effect of a problem rather than the system... no schools, no full time trainers, trainees, or supervisors... OJT presupposes we have both the knowledge and the time to do it.

**Diversity and Equal Opportunity: Where do we stand?** COs acknowledged the Navy had implemented successful programs to allow equal opportunity for all and adjusted to women serving in, and even commanding, Combatant ships. The female CO faced minor harassment from male naval officers having a hard time adjusting to the new Navy. CO's interviewed, who were racial minorities, only spoke of their wonderful opportunities and ability to maximize their careers. One CO spoke out on the apparent coddling required to ensure none of the designated officers failed. He observed orders adjusted, and potentially lowering of standards to ensure the Navy made quotas on advancement and selection rates. Should that trend continue, the value of the Navy as a meritocracy may come under attack.

**What ways have the changes in the operational and environmental expectations shifted the nature of challenges faced in Command? How could we measure them?**

Commanding officers thought they faced a different and expanding set of challenges in Command after September 11 2001. "Challenges are harder now," said late decade COs. COs can expect challenges involving the schedule, managing programs and their execution, and sustaining their relationships with people: seniors, ship, and family. Always for ships at sea, the weather and surprises in seamanship and shiphandling

evolutions pose great risks to successful commands. The current effort aims to “tame” the information explosion.

**Seamanship and Ship Handling.** Years of preparations in various jobs at sea can still not prepare one for every occasion. Two COs related ship-ocean imposed “pop tests” of their Seamanship and Ship Handling abilities. CO9 discussed his narrow escape during an UNREP and CO15 used an incident while entering port to demonstrate how he “maintained a cool sense of Command” to keep others from overreacting. CO7 noted he kept Kipling’s “If” posted in his cabin for all to read.

CO2 related his attention focused on training sea detail teams:

So much so that when one important person with the CONN made a mistake by calling for left full rudder about a mile too soon, several different people spoke up, ordered rudder amidships, and placed the ship back on the safe track. During our post evolution debrief and review, all watchstanders contributed different, but supporting, reasons for jumping in to avert disaster.

CO9 elaborated:

In one of my first UNREPs, we lost propulsion alongside an oiler with lines across. Nothing could have prepared me for that except to follow my nature to stay calm, tell the Oiler’s Master what was happening, and wait for reports. And, there was no one there to tell me ‘It’s OK.’ We had a PCC casualty and slowed to nine knots. The oiler slowed enough to stay even, we got all lines clear, and we pulled away.

And later;

But we weren’t finished with excitement for that day. In the very next UNREP, up ahead was a sailboat that had the right of way over most ships. We performed a ‘Corpen N’ (a simultaneous turn while attached and alongside to another ship) to miss by about 30 yards from our bow. I do not know how the oiler missed the sailboat as well.

CO15 related:

On my LSD when we were in a narrow channel approaching the pier for a port visit, there was a ship in our berth. We had no choice, and I directed the Ship’s Bos’n to ‘Drop the hook,’ and then told the JO with the CONN to keep us in the

channel using small twists of the ship, and occasionally back down to keep the anchor dug in.

**People.** COs are responsible for their people. The challenges can come from all directions: their bosses, their immediate confidants, or any level of the chain of command.

**Bosses.** Commanders (CDRs) in their O-5 commands have the tough position in working for the Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) commander, an O-6 Captain (the "Commodore") who oversees a number of ships. The ships are not always on the same cycle or even close to the Commodore's schedule. All COs confessed to having problems understanding their bosses. Only one had kind words for a Commodore. Even in the world of lighting communications and increased connectivity, communications breakdowns and misunderstandings do occur. As CO5 related:

I was shocked by the low amount of faith any senior showed in me on the DDG. The whole time in command, I was never asked an opinion, and discovered there were 500 ways to get in touch with you to keep advised- or confused.

He had recorded the impetus for these thoughts in a series of entries in his CO's logbook:

D-28: Got a fairly blistering email from Commodore around mid-day and spent the rest of the day trying to figure out how to answer it. I'm sure he meant well, but it came across as a significant indictment of the ship and of my materiel management track record for the first four weeks in command.....My reaction varied from amusement to bewilderment. Hope he doesn't take offence at the answer I provided.

D-30: Flag, his aide, and my Commodore embarked for our U/W. ... Good day and after dinner, had a good talk with the Commodore re: various stuff. He apologized for the email, in so many words, said that we went back and re-read it, and realized that it sounded a bit harsh.

CO6 chimed in:

I also had to deal with an overbearing Commodore. He tried to get me to focus more on engineering programs. The commodore was starting to micromanage a guy who had been a 1200-psi EOOW, and a GS EOOW so I basically ignored

him and the other COs and I created the CO Mutual Protection Society for defense of the waterfront.

As well as CO7:

In CDR command, I had to spend a lot of time learning to deal with my Commodore. I had designed a scheme for ASW ops in the Taiwan Straits as we were sent there to show support for Taiwan when China threatened to disrupt their presidential elections in 1996. He was not impressed that I took the initiative to apply my ASW knowledge and try to maximize our capability.

CO1 also could not get through to the Boss, above the Commodore:

On the Monday of the first week following INSURV, at a meeting with the Admiral (COMNAVSURFLANT) and his council of Captains, I was shocked when the Admiral asked, 'Captain, what could you have done better?' I answered him 'Nothing' ... I then showed him the brief that I had sent previously—nine months before—to all 16 of his assistant Chiefs of Staff asking for help to address the upcoming INSURV....Eventually, the Navy poured \$3 Million into ship to get it ready for deployment....Problem stemmed from lack of money for ship readiness dollars, which included manning (numbers and experience), maintenance, and training.

CO12 was nearly ruined by a Boss:

I also learned to never be surprised by a FITREP on that second CHENG tour. I had one CO who wrote me bad Fitrep I had not expected. He had prided himself as being from the last non-female class at the Naval Academy. That made my path to command not exactly smooth. I had done back-to-back tours as an Engineering Department Head on a DD and CG, and I wasn't screening for XO due to the poor FITREP from the CG CO.

So after Joint Professional Military Education (JPME), I took a Navigator position on a 'Big Deck' AMPHIB to boost my selection confidence for XO and CO. The AMPHIB experience was a great tour, and I worked for my first female CO, and I screened for XO as a result, 'the SWO Gods lined up behind me.' Screening boards can be whom you know as well as what you did... and one of my mentors, the female CO, was on the Board. I screened on my fourth look... The CG CO who had given me poor Fitreps, even after I was CHENG, passed all CERTS and OPPEs, and had extended for the cruise, had been fired, and the COs on the board knew enough to discount that aberrant report.

**XOs.** A few COs had interesting happenings either as XO on their way to command, or with their XO. The CO/XO relationship also presented several lessons.

CO8 related his XO tour began with the CO confessing he needed lots of help and CO8 served as a defacto CO as XO. In stressing their advice for XOs, the COs focused on creating clean ships, trained crews, and squared away programs with PMS, Safety and Damage Control on top. Many COs implored the XOs main job was forceful support of the CO. CO12 discovered that the second XO had not conformed to the model XO. The strongest COs discussed the importance of a CO-XO-CMC team that led together to raise standards and impart awareness of success throughout the ship. Some things that seem simple when you observe them: clean passageways, well painted spaces, on-time execution of maneuvers, and guns that go “Boom” on demand are the result of a continuous and steady strain of continuous excellence.

CO5 recalled:

“Spoke at length w/ the XO. Told him that things just aren’t getting done quickly/ thoroughly. Gave him a memo outlining some steps to take.”

CO10:

I recalled thinking as a Department Head, ‘the XO does not look like he's having fun’... maybe I should try to skip that experience and go straight to command. I do think there is no way to be a good XO without being a Department Head.... and no way to be a good CO without being a good XO.

From there my reprieve came when I was assigned to be an XO on a DDG. It was my most formative tour and once there, I relished being second in Command. It gave me the chance to second guess, test, and learn. It was ‘safe’ since if I guessed wrong, it was not just my problem. The CO relied on me for almost every seamanship or shiphandling evolution. I never really held a critique on the CO, but I did have the ‘aha moment when I was ready’ for command.’ After an UNREP where it took longer than it should have to get lined up and then finish. I felt I could have done it better than the CO managed to do it. I was ready!

CO8 related:

I was first named to be assigned to a DDG, but later my assignment was switched to a DD. The DD CO had called BUPERS looking for a new XO. One of my cohorts from the DDG was a detailer, and he said 'I have just the guy.' So the BUREAU sent me to the older DD. As I arrived, the CO confessed 'I am dog tired; I cannot connect with crew; you've got it!' Essentially, I became the defacto CO as XO. So over the next two years, I helped the CO lead the ship during their workup, through the deployment to OIF, and then return for post deployment leave and upkeep and to the Decommissioning process. The whole tour was a tremendous preparation for command.

CO12 noted:

"I had lost my XO just before that trip due to family issues, and never got along as well with the new one. I discovered later that he had worked against me."

***Department Heads.*** Several COs noted how much they had to be involved in teaching their department heads. Since every ship has three line department heads, most COs had at least one encounter with the level of detail they had to exert our administrative matters. Some were surprised by a Department Head's inability to follow prescribed Navy formatting and paperwork practices. CO3 noted a difference between officers who had been advanced to officers through enlisted commissioning programs. Most of those officers had skipped initial SWOS Division Officer courses since they had ship and operating experience at sea. He pegged the need for extra training of his department heads on those officers' lack of preparation. Other COs faced similar issues across the range of officers at the Department Head level, and the challenges were growing as more officers who had never undergone the SWOS DOC course were coming as department heads. CO4, CO6, CO7, CO15, and CO16 noted the solution was to clarify expectations, often with explicit demonstrations of the commitment required and allow developing department heads to see and learn what "good performance" meant.

CO7:

I noted that many officers' Shiphandling confidence had waned. The Department Heads lacked some tactical fundamentals and many folks discovered they had forgotten to press in to know why we did some things certain ways. In ASW, passive Sonar tactics had been forgotten.

CO15:

I discovered massive problems with sea duty screening. The previous CO left me to deal with an inappropriate relationship between the QMC (Chief Quartermaster) and an Officer. One of my other Offices was already married to a Chief; the Engineer, a failed Nuke was crazy; and the First LT would spend two weeks of every month in a crying bag. Only the OPSO was somewhat capable. COs don't have enough ability to fire Department Heads.

CO16:

I had 100 fewer sailors than when I served on the same ship 20 years earlier. My boss told me I could fire the CHENG and XO. I didn't right away, and it turned out they were able to do their jobs with right direction and leadership.

*Division Officers.* As the newest members of the ship, Division Officers are typically the number one source of challenge and often, amusement, for COs. It is among these officers that future COs are being born. CO7 related his own effect on his COs: "Capture enthusiasm; don't quench their desire to excel." One of CO2's great victories was seeing the metamorphosis of a junior officer. CO15 related his efforts to rescue a junior officer from neglect. CO16 noted the adage "The first report is always wrong." Several COs noted the effect of observing a good example as a junior officer sealed their choices to aspire for command. All recalled the bad examples which they endeavored to avoid. Some confessed that certain paradigms, such as the XO's persona, were difficult to avoid. CO15: "As XO on the LSD, the Sailors weren't trained. I had to become the 'screaming, ranting lunatic XO' to get folks to respond."

CO14:

When I relieved, the DIVOs I inherited were all qualified and had a full seven-month deployment with NATO under their belts, so they were skilled at operating. They helped me train the next group. The Department Heads were about half way through their tours; we even still had a few pre-comm guys on ship as I took over. Their high standards carried over to the oncoming crews.

**CPOs.** As much as Chiefs play key roles in development, several officers were wary of giving chiefs more credit than they demonstrated. Some COs thought that the Chiefs had retired, rather than stood up to take charge as “A” schools and other pre-ship preparations for Sailors vanished. Many were not fully prepared to take up the slack. However, CO2, CO8, and CO11 specifically noted the importance of the Division Officer and CPO relationship. CO1 even counseled DIVOs and CPOs together.

The Chiefs were a help for many of the COs as they made their way to Command.

CO2 noted:

A key division officer/ Chief Petty Officer (DIVO/CPO) relationship developed on my first ship that was exactly what I needed as Ensign. The Chief supported me in front of the troops, and felt empowered to correct me in private when needed.... I have a feeling it is very different today.... I am convinced I would have had a very different career without that influence. We should not discount those kinds of influences.

CO8 added, “As a group, I knew that a CPO could be the CO’s best friend (as well as my worst enemy). By the time I left, my Command Senior Chief had made me an Honorary CPO.”

Some COs also were disappointed by the quality of current chiefs:

CO5 noted:

The CPO mess had become more complacent, almost packing it in. They were seeing themselves as ‘mentors’ vice knowledgeable experts/ executors of their Sailors’ day to day wrench turning. The focus on advanced degrees for senior enlisted may have hurt, rather than expanded, their professional expertise and experience.

CO13 assessed:

As a DIVO, I felt capable in PMS and had a CPO/WCS to help me. But now, no CPOs have the knowledge or understanding of PMS to pass it to their JOs. On some ships, only the COs actually remember how to make the system work! I keep hearing different tales about the CPO mess. I saw and was disappointed to learn that the level of expertise and knowledge is just not there. Some can only go back to what they were told by the last guy. None have gone to the references to review what they're supposed to do in basic programs.

CO15 charged:

We had no experienced and reliable CPOs. The CPOs today talk a good game, but don't do because they don't know how. The Navy does not have enough ENCMs to meet manning designs and there is no training for main propulsion Enginemen, and certainly no advanced schools. I worked hard to get a master chief EN but was sent an ENC who had been on a DDG first, and EOOW qualified on the gas turbine plant. He had made Chief through the Recruiter quality program and returned to sea to beef up his resume' to help him go LDO. He had no background for running an engine room on an LSD.

Several COs extolled the contributions of the Senior Enlisted Advisor/ Command

Master Chiefs. CO16 proclaimed:

The CMC had the CPO mess lined up [I am not always impressed by Chief's messes but when led and challenged, they can do well and motivate their people.] We managed to 'Pass' the 3M Inspection with all departments getting passable marks. The CPO mess became stronger as we passed every hurdle.

**Junior Enlisted.** COs play important roles in the development of their most junior enlisted Sailors, often the period begins as a conduct problem from Captain's Mast. CO8 related two stories; one with a positive ending and one, with a disappointing thud. CO7 told of the Navy Advancement scoring system not believing his Sailors had scored as well on advancement exams. Retakes proved that in fact the Sailors were so well prepared they aced the exams again. A dedicated effort to train and assist sailors advance plays long-term dividends across the Navy.

***Focus on Family.*** All COs mentioned their concerns for the Sailors and their families. Learning how to discover their motives, dreams, and heartaches is a gift most CO's develop over their preparation and service:

CO1 focused on balancing quality of life with quality of service:

Good food and clean ship make a big difference. They yield a good environment... They saw I cared about their quality of life (QOL)... People will work all day long if they know you care! I spent a lot of time walking the ship and performed many of the basic Sailor routines, such as serving in the galley.

CO2 said, "I was focused on qualifying and preparing as many folks as I could for success. I often wrote letters to the Sailor's spouse or parents to inform them of their Sailor's arrival, progress, and success."

CO3 noted the advantage being at sea and busy when away from home. "The crew was happy to be operating and to visit new places. And, we weren't too heavily tasked during the six months we were home."

CO4 used the system:

I also used the Command Climate survey conducted by a group of O-6 reservists who would survey the crew and report on 'how folks feel.' In my walking around the ship, I developed a scheme to get at the Sailor's concerns. I found that if you ask 'What are you doing?' They'll say 'Nothing.' If you ask, 'How are you doing?' They'll say 'Great.' But, if you ask 'What's bothering you' they will 'Vomit their life story'. You can't get at a sailor unless you ask those three questions. My philosophy was 'We care; my priorities were Mission, People, and Equipment.

"Sailors have to know that you'll back them up."

CO5 noted:

D-144: Put out a double O sweep ... but a hydraulic line ruptured. A quick thinking EN ran to the rupture, placed his hand over the leak, secured the gear, and set the brake. Once the gear was back on deck, I awarded the EN3 a NAM. What a superb morning!

CO6 recalled:

I took over when the DD was struggling to meet minimum standards and figuring out how to integrate women following the decree that opened all ships to women, ready or not. The Navy did not do it well. .... We made some local alterations that improved some living conditions. It was my first experience dealing with women in the crew of a Navy ship that was not prepared to avoid fraternization.... I found that in most aspects, I could treat them as adults, but in terms of fraternization, I found that treating the Sailors more like high school kids, or as my own teenagers, helped. Laying out clear guidelines and tolerating no violations allowed the crew to mold itself into one focused unit.

CO7 discussed the Sailors:

Today's Sailor is every bit as motivated as those in any previous generation were, and certainly is NOT avoiding the draft. Yet we 'dumb down'" our training, and expect them to work with antiquated tools and methods. They can exceed our expectations, easily. We need to challenge them, but we need to return to theory and standards based training to do so.

CO8 wondered why it took so much effort to get the system to respond:

Getting the right people to ship was harder than I thought it should have been. We were not manned to where we should be to do the job expected of us—manning reductions have hurt combat readiness. The quality of today's Sailor is different and better. Most of their worldviews have been shaped by the events of 9/11 and thereafter. Their approach to life allows them to stay motivated, and makes it easier to get through tough times.

CO9 noticed the effect of the Information Explosion on the cohesiveness of the ship's family back home. Ships appoint Ombudsmen who help the CO, XO, and CMC manage the message going home:

Ombudsmen have become nearly obsolete. A Sailor can communicate daily with his wife or girlfriend. Not many AMCROSS messages, but the word on a tragedy or a positive happening like a birth would come directly to sailor, skipping many of the chain of command. What do we just learn to live with? How much can we expect or accept?

My confidence grew as they performed. I really focused on trusting and treating people with respect. No bullying people. You can give people orders and they'll work all day long as long as they were treated with respect and understood 'the why.' I was firm, but was not about belittling or threatening people. I fired a CPO who didn't listen.

CO10 recalled:

I liked to go out on the 'Smoke deck' and have a cigar all the while I listened to conversations. On the first occasion, they were very tense. But I did it often enough to have them relax. I found that if you ask a sailor a question, they will answer.....I worked to get into their mind, all the way into the 'trust center.' We used everything we could such as posting lists on bulletin boards of who was doing well. I had a good CMC.

CO11 added:

And there is a cultural difference: the current generation is savvy and expects to have access to a greater amount of information. We need to provide that. They are used to sharing and have not been exposed to many boundaries.

I demanded unusual respect both up and down the chain of command. I treated the Wardroom and CPO mess together. I wanted them to be able to relate to me and allow them to be comfortable with whom I was, so they could be themselves around me. I worked to have them experience, observe, and want to emulate our best. The 'top down' view made me the bottom since ultimately I had all the responsibilities.

CO12 affirmed:

The best days are when you can do something really good for a Sailor or their families. I was able to Command Advance a deserving Sailor with his wife in attendance at the surprise ceremony.

CO13 noted:

Everything has legs outside the lifelines. We have focused too much on 'other stuff' instead of the real mission. We 'coddle' folks and fail to expect them to act like adults; but we don't treat them like adults. After a junior Sailor undergoes a DUI investigation, 'Because he was 18 and stupid' is no longer an acceptable conclusion. It is smoked out as a leadership failure and the DIVO and CPO get the real blame.

CO14 stressed, "Strive to be the best. Do things by the book; work hard and stay motivated; maintain a concern for sailors and families; be respectful and honest."

CO15 realized his position as a junior CO on the PC:

My main challenge on the PC was being as good of a CO as the crew deserved. That crew was outstanding. They were cross-qualified, and especially screened,

selected, and trained. My DIVOs and Department Heads were all former enlisted. I was the only member of the crew without a Good Conduct Medal.

CO16 declared:

Standards simply needed to get higher. Moreover, the Crew wanted to be led; they didn't like being screwed up. But it wasn't happening easily.... Err on the side of the Sailor.

**Execution and Operations.** This section discusses four major areas spanning execution and operations: the rise of programs, each with management tentacles; personal challenges, operational challenges from OPTEMPO, and handling the information explosion. Meeting challenges reflect the synchronization of the elements of Execution.

**Programs.** Four main programs remained vital to readiness; but new ones such as implementing programs designed to prevent abuse of people, drugs, alcohol, or families have cut into time for taking care of the physical part of the ship and the professional qualifications of the crew. The continuous personal involvement of the CO echoed the old farm proverb "Nothing improves productivity as much as the footprints of the owner" (Gardner, 1994, p. 379). CO4 and CO10 discussed practices they employed to assure themselves that programs were doing what they were intended to do. All COs used variations of MBWA (Management by walking around).

**Personal.** Knowing when to say when is a key component to a CO's success. CO4 related instances when he pushed himself too hard and the ship suffered negative consequences from which they recovered. CO15 recounted when his XO made him leave the bridge to get some rest because he had become "combat ineffective." CO12 noted the importance of not showing any drag. Several added, "Smile." COs must remember they were inspired by their commanders and must strive to become the inspiration for future

COs. Navy leaders develop future Navy leaders. The best COs develop the best future COs.

Each CO faced personal challenges from holding their tempers to wondering if they had done enough. CO4 noted, “I found my biggest enemies revolved around me trying to do it all myself, all at once, overload with compounding fatigue.” CO8 reported:

I learned to employ Captain’s Mast as a performance excellence shaping tool. I had a lot more UCMJ cases than expected- but that’s because I didn’t have many prior experiences, even as XO. I applied a deep, personal attention to every case. I knew my decision would affect the person and his family and send a message to the crew. I thought through my decisions to ensure they were consistent with what I thought we stood for. That didn’t mean I made up my mind beforehand.

**Operational.** Several COs discussed overcoming their bosses’ second-guessing of their actions during encounters with the adversary. CO5 has to explain his decision processes when he took defensive actions to defend the CVN from attack during an exercise. CO9 had to defend his solution to protect his crew and still be ready for INSURV. Many complained about the advanced tendencies to micromanage the information explosion seem to allow.

**Information Flow.** How to help the CO stay out in front of information flow is challenging. The upper chain of command’s appetite for information is “mind-numbing.” (CO13). CO1 was the first to declare how suffocating the continuous guidance from above on his ability to command. “Every aspect of my life was micromanaged.” CO15 addressed the need to control from the top in helping his OOD discover the right questions to ask. “What information do we need?” By forcing his people to think about the problem and what they could do to help, he built the case for allowing those on the scene to take immediate action to place the ship in a safe condition; then only asking for

the minimum information necessary to assure themselves that all immediate actions were complete. The boss can anticipate the need to help, but not all situations require extra help. What must be done is a better recognition of capabilities from each level. Perhaps the knowledge that manning, maintenance, and experience degradations means that COs can solve problems only with advice and continuous direction from above. In many cases, COs noted the real support required was to rebuild the cancelled programs and restack the operational priorities.

COs must become masters of “information management.” Only the ship’s CO can comprehend fully the vital importance of knowing the answers to questions such as these:

- What information does the CO hold?
- What information does the CO have?
- What information does the CO lack?
- What is impact of the availability, accuracy, reliability, and how much does my boss need to know (to keep him out of my hair) and how much do my people need to know to perform their jobs better?

**What parameters did you note to assess your performance in command? How did you drive your confidence in Command?**

COs named at least three indicators for Success that can be summed up as “faces, places, and paces.” All noted the importance of looking their people in the eye and talking with them. Often their feelings show on their faces from despair to ultimate pride and determination. They all want to succeed. During their walk abouts, COs found various places to observe and monitor to gauge a sense of the crew. Many observe that the galley and messdecks were good places to get a sense of the crew. Others found hanging around the ship’s store or even on the “Smoke deck.” An interesting note, the

Navy moved from a majority of people who smoked to some ships that were actually smoke free. The tempo and pace of the crew in executing assignments was another indicator. CO6 had noted the smartness of a “squared away ship” that he attributed to the leadership of the Captain.

Nearly every CO spoke about a penchant for walking around and seeing what was going on. Some referred to it as MBWA, others as “marching the plant.” CO14 explained:

I like talking to people. I was an MBWA guy. I test as a strong ENTJ/ but lately F sometimes shows up. I would go out seeking direct feedback: How are we doing? How are you getting ready for the next hurdle? Listening below the level is a key trait for COs.

CO15 described:

LSD command was shocking. From the freedoms I had as a LT on the PC to continuous and often, overpowering guidance with no top cover to help me solve any maintenance or personnel problems on LSD. I discovered massive problems with sea duty screening. The previous CO left me to deal with an inappropriate relationship between the QMC (Chief Quartermaster) and an Officer. One of my other Offices was already married to a Chief; the Engineer, a failed Nuke was crazy; and the First LT would spend two weeks of every month in a crying bag. Only the OPSO was somewhat capable. COs don't have enough ability to fire Department Heads. The previous CO had qualified no OODs and no one made SWO. I took on a mentee challenge: a LT who should have been on his way out of the Navy for non-Qualification- But helped him get a chance on a new DDG as DCA.

CO16 recollected:

I was able to raise the level of performance on both ships and kept the crews focused on mission. I had a couple of meltdowns, but recovered quickly. It can all work, but a true picture of readiness first comes from understanding standards. I would always start with cleanliness, the PMS and qualifications.

CO10 noted:

In thinking about key pulse points or how to assure myself things were going well, we originally used the Division in the Spotlight (‘DITS’) concept, but some

things, Safety, 3M, Career Counseling, warrant a shipwide look. So I developed the 'Program in the Spotlight' (PITS).

**Would you be willing to share any artifacts (Command Philosophies, Letters from Command, etc.) to enable me to do cross-comparisons with others' like products, including my own?**

Eight COs (CO3, CO5, CO6, CO7, CO8, CO9, CO11, CO14, and CO15) shared their written Command Philosophies. CO1, CO2, CO4, CO10, CO12, CO13, and CO16 had no formal written philosophy, but were able to espouse how they executed Command. All delivered theirs in recurring addresses to their crews and wardrooms as well. Some who had no written out philosophy noted they had never seen one lived. Common phrases included mission, safety, training, family, respect, doing one's best, and integrity. Several COs provided samples of speeches they delivered on special occasions. A few provided sample letters they sent from Command to families or other COs encouraging them to stay the course and get involved in details. CO5 maintained a logbook of his times in command. And several provided Handouts from SWOS or from their personal command leadership lesson plans.

All seemed to have been dedicated to living up to the philosophies and were realistic in assessing when they had perhaps not emulated the qualities they espoused.

CO9 noted:

I really focused on trusting and treating people with respect. No bullying people. You can give people orders and they'll work all day long as long as they were treated with respect and understood 'the why.' I was firm, but was not about belittling or threatening people. I fired a CPO who didn't listen.

CO3 noted "I had a reluctance to scream or even ask hard questions because they would shut down on any show of 'sternness' and I'm not a stern guy." CO4 "I found my

biggest enemies revolved around me trying to do it all myself- all at once, overload with compounding fatigue.”

CO5 wrote on one occasion:

D-166: Painfully frustrating Admin day. Personally rewrote the pre-underway checklist. Determined that it’s possible to come up with points off a chart and enter them into PINS. Got ticked off because someone on the bridge has been using my binoculars (starting to sympathize with Capt. Queeg here).

CO8 added:

I was never angry; and tried not to stay mad for more than a minute. ... and always sought the people who had received the full-face shot of my temper to ensure they knew it was the act, not the person, that I was mad at.

CO15 confessed to using known short term leadership techniques as XO out of desperation to meet deadlines.

As XO on the LSD, the Sailors weren’t trained. I had to become the ‘screaming, ranting lunatic XO’ to get folks to respond. There was a precipitous falloff in Department Head quality and knowledge from those who had missed the benefit of early SWOS Division Officer courses after SWOS DOC changed.

**What is the one thing about your experience as a Commanding Officer you would tell to three specific audiences: Prospective Department Heads, Prospective Executive Officers, and Prospective Commanding Officers?**

COs provided advice that will sustain the leadership at sea. Command is a calling, and the CO makes a huge difference.

To Prospective Department Heads:

Department Head is perhaps the hardest tour. Discover and work your drive for command. Learn your whole job: equipment, people, and ship. Begin to see your larger role in the Navy. Help CPOs teach JOs. Focus on knowing ‘who, what, where, why, when, how long, and how much.’

To Prospective Executive Officers (PXOs):

Be the XO, not the PCO. Take care of CO. Back the CO and make you both heroes. Take care of Crew (Do XO messing and Berthing. Lead the training teams.) Take care of ship (3M, DC, safety). Prepare for CO.

To Prospective Commanding Officers (PCOs):

Being CO is hard; and it's really hard when you do it right. Work it. Enjoy it. Relish it. Stay in there. Remember, command is a responsibility, not a reward. CO is not about you. Make sure your CMC works the chiefs. Help make your XO ready for Command. 'Man up' to say it's not safe. Cherish your time. Err on the side of sailors.

The right CO can turn a ship around; but it takes a deep personal commitment and much staying power as reflected by CO16:

I had heard that interviewing the crew personally could improve buy in. I started from the top and interviewed the crew one by one. I got through about two thirds of them. By then, we had complete 'buy in' and began to 'hum.'

We needed to clean the ship before we ever could think about true excellence. I implemented 'Clampdown' and told the XO that we need Os and CPOs to lead it and the E6 to be involved. I gave them a few days to get it going, but my first checks resulted in an explosion. As I was out 'MBWA', I found the Wardroom full of DIVOs and Department Heads. I chased them out and proceeded through Officer's Country kicking everyone out of their staterooms. I was headed to the Chief's Quarters next, but Intel had gotten to the mess and the CPOs had gotten out to their spaces to be with their Sailors.

Every CO encouraged those in the trenches to decide to stay the course if their heart was in it. Several acknowledged the special "Calling" of command. If one hears it, admit it, and actively seek more responsibility and greater challenges. "Run to the sound of the guns." Key advice covered getting ready through study, application, and seeking experiences. Selection still demands working hard to excel in every assignment and avoiding embarrassing your boss. The bosses may not always look good, but you will need to help their recovery or stand up to be the one to say "No more." In the words amalgamated from sixteen successful COs: "Command is a privilege. Be a good and faithful servant. It is not all about You. COs will still be involved in the details."

Following these bullets may help:

- Take time for yourself to refresh and rekindle your enthusiasm for command.
- Let it show.
- Prioritize. Fix the things that are most broken.
- Clarify expectations.
- Go look for yourself.
- Use your experience, even if it is light in an area, you being there still helps others focus.
- Know who you are and be yourself.
- Staying authentic makes it easier to Command.
- Care about the crew.
- Remember, command is a responsibility, not a reward.
- Command is not about you.
- Make sure your CMC works the chiefs.
- Think about what Mast means and how to make it work.
- You do not know what you do not know until you are there. Not that you are not capable or deserving just it is such a paradigm shift from anything you ever have done that it changes you.

Over the next several years, as the Surface Navy shifts to Fleet up XO-CO scenarios, some XOs may pay the price for not acting forcefully to rescue their COs from exercising bad judgment or ignoring consequences of their intended actions. “When in Command, command” as CO2 rejoined, “Enjoy it. It will be gone before you *Blink*.”

## Summary

This chapter reported the results of interviews of sixteen U.S. Navy ship COs in describing their experiences in command. The COs discussed their motivations and their paths to command. They related how they achieved command selection and any barriers they faced. Some had to do more than the minimum time at sea, but all felt the time invested to attain command at sea was worth it. No development system can prepare a leader for every possible challenge, whether anticipated or unanticipated. But the best system can prepare leaders to employ experienced and knowledgeable judgment. The COs concluded that the SWOs Career Development path equipped them to meet the challenges of command at sea.

Each CO provided advice for those desiring to command at sea. All were encouraging young officers to heed the call for Command at sea. Some were realistic and acknowledged that not all will get the call, nor will those who think they had the call, attain Command. Moreover, not all who command will succeed. To a CO, all strongly cautioned any XO from assuming too much of the Captain's role unless it was freely given. Each of the COs knew when they had the "OK" from their COs to step in and handle the situations. Some did it to save the CO; others did it because the CO had deemed them ready and worthy for the challenge. Overall findings, interpretations, implications, and conclusions will be discussed in Chapter 5.

## **CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study employed qualitative methods to discover how recent commanding officer's (COs) of Navy combatant ships described their experiences in command. The study assumed that former COs would be forthcoming in discussing their command tours and that some common features of development, assignment, and meeting the challenges of command would be uncovered. All participants discussed their experiences candidly, and most offered artifacts to share to improve future commanding officers' chances of success. The inquiry sought to determine how COs assessed the adequacy and the quality of their preparations for command. Additionally, the study was designed to discover the new challenges of command in the 21st century, and the factors employed by COs to assure themselves the ship was being successful. Additionally, the study encouraged each CO to provide words of advice for current Department Heads, Prospective Executive Officers, and prospective Commanding Officers who represent those in Navy leadership positions on track to command Navy ships in the long term, midterm, and near term. This section summarizes the findings and the analysis of the results presented in the previous chapter.

### **Introduction**

In the past three years, the U.S. Navy had to replace several commanders of surface combatant ships due to loss of trust and confidence in their ability to command. Those commanders succumbed to the challenge of command. This section answers the

research questions; then discusses the results in detail, and provides implications of the interpretations of the results. It also expounds on the study's limitations and explains how each could be mitigated. Finally, the chapter presents topics for further exploration and follow-on studies.

### **Summary of the Results**

This dissertation explored how recent commanding officers of Navy ships described how they were prepared to face the challenges of command, how they met the expectations, and how they assessed they were successful in command. This study recorded and analyzed sixteen Surface Navy officers' recollections, and personal accounts of their experiences in command of U.S. Navy combatant ships. When available, artifacts provided by the former COs and historical records were reviewed to triangulate reported performance or achievements of the ships. This analysis captured the COs' expressions of their Command Philosophies and validated their explanations of practices in conducting command. Beginning with their early desire, the study traced the COs' paths and preparation for command through their careers, and conducted more in depth analysis of their command experiences. Several commanded on more than one occasion; one commanded ships at three different levels as a Lieutenant Commander, as a Commander, and as a Captain.

The researcher employed a qualitative case study method to discern the challenges of command and determine if the COs thought their challenges had shifted compared to their experiences of their first ships' COs. The research questions and overall results follow.

**Q: How did former U. S. Navy’s cruiser-destroyer force commanding officers of the 21st Century describe how they met the challenges of command at sea?**

COs acknowledged that command at sea is one of the most challenging leadership and management positions; but was also the one most rewarding. All observed how much they missed the daily, never ending, often surprising, challenges, and the ability to shape the future Officers and Sailors of the Navy.

**Q: What challenges did they anticipate they would face in their tour in command at sea and what prepared COs to address these challenges?**

The COs of this era faced declining resources, shrinking shore support and maintenance funding, and reductions in the number of Sailors assigned to their ships. The rising OPTEMPO exacerbated these challenges, offering more opportunities to excel. COs praised their preparations including the SWO formal career development process, their opportunity to interact with a variety of people and technologies, and their former COs. Those COs served as examples who sustained and shaped these future COs for command. Time at sea and under pressure to perform created commanders who were resilient and adaptable. All had developed a measure of confidence (self-efficacy) that they could meet the challenge.

**Q: What new challenges occurred and how did the preparation help them to meet the new challenges?**

Most COs were surprised by the negative consequences caused by the reductions in manning and a general lack of knowledge stemming from choices to cut personnel, maintenance, and training regimes made by past Surface Warfare flag officers. Their paths and preparations as SWOs bolstered all. Several were surprised by a difference in expectations between the ship communities: CRUDES, Frigate, Mine Warfare, and

AMPHIB (and for three of them, the PC world in Special Operations). In response to challenges from new programs, most mentioned the challenge of finding the right people to manage the various programs beyond 3M, Damage Control, Training and Qualification, and Safety. All had to invest time and intellectual capital to manage and survive the “Information explosion” brought by advances in connectivity. Command has moved under an intense spotlight. Most chipped about the smothering involvement of their Seniors. Some cautioned about trying to do too much on one’s own; yet recognized that only the Captain can harness the combined efforts.

**Q: What factors did Commanding Officers use to judge their success in command?**

Meeting commitments, hearing the “Gun go ‘Boom’,” surprising Sailors with awards and watching their mentees select for greater challenges were mentioned as indicators of success. Winning ship awards were secondary to taking care of Sailors and their families. All employed variations on a “get around the ship and go look philosophy,” which has been termed “MBWA” (Peters & Waterman, 1982, p. 289); combined with constant follow-up and follow through. All led through a “hands on” approach to influence, cajole, direct, or drive their charges to mission accomplishment. COs who were involved, gained valuable insights by listening to the daily banter of their Sailors and demonstrating confidence in assigning more responsibilities to their advancing disciples.

**Q: What advice would they offer for those desiring to command at sea?**

To Department Heads, COs focused the message on learning the ship and its mission, and appreciating their people and how their contributions fit into the overall

success of the Navy. To the executive officers (XOs), COs focused their concerns on keeping the ship clean and squared away. An XO's number one job is executing the CO's policies; followed closely by overseeing the key people-focused programs of training, maintenance, and damage control. To prospective COs, the message focused on respect and the meaning of the position, the concept of total responsibility of the person, and the authenticity of the persona. Learning and knowing one's true self solidified the development efforts of future commanders.

### **Discussion of the Results**

The study set out to capture the stories in words and pictures of commanding officers of Navy ships in the last decade and begin to understand how the challenges to command in the 21st century have shifted, if at all. Interestingly, several challenges explored in the literature review, were not even mentioned by any of the COs. No major concerns with "Generation X" or "Millennials" surfaced. The problem of generations was confined to a discussion of the quality of officers produced by choosing former enlisted Sailors for officer programs. Additionally, the transition from "Don't Ask Don't Tell" gave way to full implementation of merit based on performance regardless of sexual orientation. More dissatisfaction was apparent from the new mandatory training on personal conduct including sexual assault, trafficking in persons, and personal financial management. Each program came with extra progress reports and required off-ship education of program managers, taking key leaders away from the deckplates and making them unavailable to apply the constant attention required to manage a ship's routine today. Mandatory Joint education and assignments instituted by the Goldwater-

Nichols Defense Reorganization Act (1986) and the lingering effects from Tailhook also had little bearing on the CO's success. Most officers had completed Joint Professional Military Education (JPME, e.g., "War College") and a joint assignment. The female CO acknowledged some early prejudice, but "pinned her ears back" and earned the respect from all levels as she performed, and held her own in most encounters with some SWOs who have not "grown up."

The presentation of findings follows themes based on the research questions or generated from analysis of the COs' responses. Themes include the SWO path to command, preparations and hope, challenges in Command including experiences and surprises, the information explosion, and advice for those enroute to command.

### **SWO Path to Command**

The SWO path to command works. The pattern follows along the best leader development schemes including training, on site performance, and regular evaluation by key leaders (Compton, 2008; Gambrell, Matkin, & Burbach, 2011; Hall, Hannum & McCarthy, 2009; Ray, 2010; Young & Dulewicz, 2008). Officers are assigned early responsibility for people, equipment, and ship operations. These responsibilities will grow as the officer proves worthy of greater assignments (Capretta et al., 2008; Novicevic et al., 2006; Young & Dulewicz, 2008). Officers serve as Division Officers, usually with a Chief to teach, "what can't be taught in schools" (CO12). In the first sea tour, officers qualify as Officers of the Deck and establish their credentials as a capable mariner. Due to the scheduled employment of ships, an officer normally experiences each phase of the cycle- maintenance, dedicated ship training and preparation, deployment, and continuous execution of fundamental programs: 3-M (PMS and

MDCS), training (PQS) and qualification, damage control, and safety. Following a shore tour, which may include advanced education, officers attend the Surface Warfare Officers School Department Head course and additional schools to begin their Department Head assignments at sea. Most officers serve one tour and then transfer to a ship with higher challenges and more responsibility. These experiences build resilience and adaptability (Hall et al., 2009; Mayer, 2001; Taylor, 2005). Each of those tours expose officers to decisions, successes, and minor defeats, as they develop into more capable mariners (Crossan & Bedrow, 2003; Young & Dulewicz, 2008). Their confidence in being able to do the job allows them to gain self-efficacy and look toward command (Dragoni, Tesluk, Russell, and Oh, 2009). Most of the officers in this study followed a shore tour and an XO assignment; then a break, and selection to command.

The current plan calls for officers to select for XO/CO based on their Department Head experiences. In reality, even those who had split XO-CO tours, were selected based on their performance as Department Heads, or as demonstrated by additional challenging assignments at sea or in key Joint assignments (Day & Lord, 1988; Larsson, Bartone, Bos-Bakx, Danielsson, Jelusic, Johansson, and Moelker, 2006; Winnefeld, 2005). Most COs of this study were not completely sold on the new concept, but desired to track results and only change the system when warranted across years of data (Novicevic et al. 2006). What is important is returning to fundamental practices as Naval leaders such as Admiral Harvey have demanded (Harvey, 2012). All must enact the discipline to hold the standard in spite of shrinking resources (Day, 2000). Several COs, led by CO16, demonstrated that course of action remains vital for maintaining the Navy in shape to prevail in any conflict at sea.

## **Preparations and Hope**

The various assignments, challenging experiences at each level, exposure to many different leaders and styles, help each CO develop a personal Command philosophy and determine their style in command. Some had to reach deep to continue demanding that certain evolutions simply follow time proven practices and procedures (Frew, 2009; Kohn, 2009). Those who commanded later in the decade demonstrated how they overcame a seeming lack of support by building their people's sense of duty, stewardship, and commitment to mission (Bryman, 2004; Hayes, 2008). That background fosters resilience and seals determination so COs never run completely out of hope. Admiral Harvey's recent post offers one indicator that COs can enter the future with confidence:

Over the past three years, the Fleet and maintenance community have taken significant actions to reverse negative Surface Force readiness health trends... These negative trends (underfunding of surface ship maintenance and our manpower accounts), however, were twenty years in the making and will take constant pressure and daily attention from us over time to resolve fully. In this environment, deploying ships/ submarines/ aircraft/ equipment that perform to design specification with Sailors confident in their ability to accomplish all assigned missions means we **MUST** hold the line on time-tested, combat proven standards that govern how we operate, maintain, inspect, certify, and command our units. (Harvey, 2012)

Each of the study's COs can attest to the importance of time proven practices to operate, repair, and fight ships at sea and prepare their crews for further advancement and continuously improving performance.

## **Challenges in Command: Experiences and Surprises in Command**

COs faced challenges, both expected and surprises, spread along various topics. Some faced cultural challenges as they took over ships in need of mindset changes.

Others faced professional challenges on their path to command, even taking on additional assignments to improve their chances for selection. Some had seamanship and shiphandling pop tests. All found people who made life in command interesting and challenging.

CO5 recalled finding a subculture among the Mineforce as he took over his MCM Rotational Crew. He was told the Mineforce had their own way and “didn’t have to be as tough” as the destroyer Navy. CO10 and CO13 faced similar challenges as they relieved on their FFGs. Moreover, CO16 found he inherited what had once been a proud ship that now was broken physically and spiritually. Each CO found the path leading out of the doldrums of sorrow, falling performance, and complacency was a return to demanding all meet standards (Chatfield, 2009; Ladkin et al.,2007). The turn-arounds did not necessarily happen immediately. It takes a day-to-day dedication to the effort and continual application of all the COs’ and their staffs’ leadership ability to work back up to excellence. A good study should be made of how the declines occurred. CO1 employed the same concepts as he worked to restore the crew’s confidence in themselves and their PC following a collision and removal of a CO.

### **Handling the Information Explosion**

COs joined in acknowledging the blessing and curse of the explosion of information and the nearly insatiable appetite of seniors for more information, faster. The connectivity and availability have engorged the appetite for information without knowing purpose or appreciating the need for speed. Just because a boss can provide advice or direction, does not mean the off-scene supervisor should. Commanders who always feel the need to intervene begin to dismantle the threads of cohesive action and

breakdown hard won trust (Bell & Zemke, 1990; Day & Lord, 1988; Wong, 2000). Advances in information management and learning how to ask the right questions have been basic ingredients for leaders always. The Navy needs to retrain seniors on the concepts of commander's intent and allowing juniors to execute. More involvement in preparation with how to employ the various concepts from OODA (Boyd in Richards, 2004) to the Recognized Primed Decision Model (RPD) (Klein, 1998) to *BLINK* (Gladwell, 2005) are warranted.

Commanders need to be able to answer for themselves the causes of the need for information and the speed at which it can arrive. They must consider what they could realistically do to help the local situation (Conroy, 2001; Gambrell, Matkin, and Burbach, 2011; Hayes, 2008; Polsfuss and Ardichvili, 2009). Often, seniors' quests for information place a freeze on the scene and prevent or delay local commanders from taking immediate actions to mitigate a pending disaster. When local commanders get interrupted and begin awaiting orders, OODA loops slow way down, and personal initiative grinds to a halt (Richards, 2004).

### **Advice for those Working toward Command**

Every CO encouraged those in the trenches to decide to stay the course if their heart was in it. Several acknowledged the special "Calling" of command. If one hears it, admit it, and actively seek more responsibility and greater challenges (Bernthal & Wellins, 2006). "Run to the sound of the guns." Key advice covered getting ready through study, application, and seeking experiences. Selection still demands working hard to excel in every assignment and avoiding embarrassing your boss. The bosses may

not always look good, but you will need to help their recovery or stand up to be the one to say “No more.”

Command is personal. Future COs must invest time to understand themselves and be authentic to sustain the bonds of trust between juniors and seniors (Avolio et al., 2004). As CO 9 noted, “Be honest with who you are. There is no ‘on/off’ switch on who you are” (Conger, 2002; Conger & Ready, 2004). Over the next several years, as the Surface Navy shifts to Fleet up XO-CO scenarios, some XOs may pay the price for not acting forcefully to rescue their COs from exercising bad judgment or ignoring consequences of their intended actions (Caldwell, 2009; Chatfield, 2009, Wisecup, 2010). “Focus on Mission. Err on the side of Sailors.” “When in Command, command,” as CO2 rejoined, “Enjoy it. It will be gone before you *Blink*.”

### **Implications of the Study Results**

Navy ship COs’ performance, attitudes, and professionalism have a major impact on the future of the Navy. Most COs of this study recalled how an early CO inspired them to drive for command. The personal quality of the Commander inspired several prospective COs. Others were inspired by observation and reflection on what the CO did. Still others were encouraged by a word or a series of words from a respected CO. And, others picked up the drive and desire almost by osmosis from their early leaders (Young & Dulewicz, 2008). All recognized the effect that a good CO would have on a ship and its crew (Murphy, 2006). Moreover, the call for sustaining a tradition of service, both as an officer and as a family legacy, can enable more to hear the call of the sea and to command. Even though Naval officers are technical and precise, command is still about

human relationships and getting the most out of the people and the ship (Harvey, 2011; Hoffman, 2008). The ageless guidance provided by *Naval Leadership and Command at Sea* still applies.

Usually, command tours that start well, end well. But as the preacher exclaimed, “The race is not always to the swift, but Time and chance happeneth to them all” (Ecclesiastes 9:11, King James Version). All attribute a factor of luck to their fortune of success in command (Sheppard, 1996; Stavridis, 2008). Naval leaders need to evaluate if there are some events that are “uncontrollable.” When Sailors lives go awry, in spite of leader involvement, ships and those who serve in them must still press on. Several COs told of being in discouraging periods, but by sticking to task and staying positive, the ship, and the crew came through (Murphy, 2006). CO16 acknowledged the assistance of a crisis response team following a significant and disheartening event.

### **Concept and Nature of Command**

As CO5 stated, “Being CO is hard, and it’s really hard when you do it right.” Moreover, seniors today are making it tougher. Thirteen of the sixteen COs who participated in this study found command more challenging than they had imagined for their predecessors. All noted that the challenges were different. Command is the “ultimate coaching job” (CO7) and is all about the people. A constant focus on mission and a demeanor that never yields about what is right set the stage for success. The study confirmed the Positive Approach to Leadership’s attribute of Confidence described as “self-efficacy” (Luthans et al., 2001) as a key component for leader success. Compton’s (2008) assertion that leaders for High Reliability Organizations such as ships can be developed through different experiences and assignments; interwoven with coaching and

mentoring; and continued training, education, and readings. The SWO path to command provides that mix. COs themselves must develop their own desire almost hunger—for command (Young & Dulewicz, 2008). The level of preparation and depth and range of an individual officer’s experiences produce an initial confidence for Command. But, that confidence will be tested. As CO2 mentioned, comfort comes from continued success in meeting day-to-day challenges. Although none used the term “self-efficacy,” one could recognize that the study’s COs had developed a measure of confidence that allowed successful execution throughout their Command tours (Butler, 2011; Luthans et al. , 2001).

### **Power of Good Commanders**

Ships’ COs hold the keys to the Navy’s future. A bad CO or even a rumor of Command malfeasance rocks not only the ship, but sends a message that the Navy is tending toward the evil COs of literature—Queeg, Bligh, or Ahab—(Lipman-Blumen, 2005). Current ship COs and stories of ships’ COs play key role in the development of the Navy’s future COs. All of the COs who participated could point to a CO who inspired them. Most commented about the effect one CO had on a small cadre of officers who would go on to commands of their own, even in other corps of the Navy.

Every one of the COs who participated admitted to having some bad days and even missteps in command, but did not become trapped by their blow-ups. CO8 noted:

I was never angry, and tried not to stay mad for more than a minute. ... and always sought the people who had received the full-face shot of my temper to ensure they knew it was the act, not the person, that I was mad at.

CO4 cautioned “A major sign and danger for COs: when you get tired, cranky, you make mistakes, and people avoid telling you important things.” All respected the Navy, their ships and Sailors, and themselves too much to let them down.

Success builds success. CO16 related how one small victory preceded many larger ones. COs who show they care about the people and the mission have greater success. CO1 highlighted that “Folks would work all day if they knew you cared.” COs who made good food, ship cleanliness, and Sailor services top priorities found they succeeded in most other areas of the ship. Execution of the primary programs: training and qualification, PMS, damage control, and safety set the stage for all around success (Bossidy & Charan, 2002). The CO cannot do it alone. The XO and CMC must contribute daily to raising awareness, holding people to the standards, and recognizing and praising excellence (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

All COs deeply appreciated the traditional words “When in doubt, call me.” Some were surprised to discover what that meant when seemingly minor decisions migrated to their attention. All acknowledged that maintaining approachability so people would call because they knew they would get firm and proven advice (Bernthal & Wellins, 2006; Conger and Ready, 2004). Famous naval historian Alfred Thayer Mahan is oft quoted, “Communications dominate war.” So it is with being an effective CO.

### **Who makes it to Command? A Life of Service**

This study indicated those who have commanded demonstrated desire, performance, attitude, and commitment. Lieutenant and Lieutenant Commander Commands are won by outstanding performance and immaculate or serendipitous timing. Although Hagerott (2008) argued for a shift in the educational focus of naval officers

from a technically based to a more generalist approach, the SWO path followed by the sample produced commanders who navigated through both. Command is more about the whole person, than being concentrated on either end of the spectrum defined by generalist or specialist.

Not all had an easy ride to or in Command, but all learned the importance of each step in the process to prepare ship's commanding officers. They mastered confidence (self-efficacy) along professional, technical, and social lines. All related instances of how they grew as persons on the path to and in Command. Each experience or assignment added to their growing bank of confidence that they were ready to meet the challenge of command (Capretta et al., 2008). All confessed that as much as they thought they were prepared, some things happened that no training, simulation, or old sea story could give one the exact answer (Sheppard, 1996). CO15 confessed:

You can't know what it's like to command until you command. And even when you get there and think you've got it, you haven't arrived yet. SWOS does best job it can preparing you, but you are still on your own.

The solutions had to be worked out on the spot using educated judgment from years of discipline and experience. That validated the concepts of Command and leadership as an art (Keegan, 1987), and theater which matches the performance to the audience (Bell & Zemke, 1990; Bennis, 2009; Mangham, 1990).

It's not exactly constant 'Improv' but it's closer to that concept than executing a formal ceremony such as a reenlistment. For some practices, Navy ships have detailed scripts to follow; others, such as transiting into and out of port, we have general guidelines and remain on our side of the channel and stay away from the shallows (CO2).

Throughout the challenge, CO's must maintain a magnificent "stage presence." CO15 related:

I did my best to follow the ‘remain calm/ steady demeanor’ on my outside. Afterwards, the JO stopped by and asked if I had ever had to anchor in the channel before? ‘Just about an hour ago,’ I said. He said you were so calm; it looked like you had done it before. I said, ‘you couldn’t see my insides. But if I had exposed them, what would your reaction have been?’ To which the JO responded weakly ‘Oh...’

CO16’s instance of discovering how he was getting through to his crew displayed the mask of” authenticity” (Avolio et al., 2004, p. 802):

The CMC asked me what I thought the crew liked about me. ‘That I make them clean and fix things and make their lives miserable when they don’t?’ ‘No, you pin your door open.’ It just seemed natural.

The CMC was conveying that the crew knew he really cared about them and trusted them enough to leave his door open as a sign of being approachable and ready to listen. CO16 had gained their trust and complete followership.

CO1 demonstrated he achieved the “fundamental state of leadership” (Quinn, 2005) as he related the focused efforts to rebuild the morale and psyche of the second PC crew:

Following a successful tour on the PC, I was assigned to command a second PC following that ship’s grounding. A grounding breaks more than ship, also the crew...’Fire everybody’ said the bosses. I argued for time to assess the situation. The challenge for that ship was to put the ship back together- physically and morally.

The shipyard went to work to rebuild the physical structure of ship. I gave the remaining crew 24 hours to determine how and show why ship went aground ... and give it to me. The results found ‘ground truth,’ and we began the work to rebuild faith and trust among the crew. My efforts to establish accountability would be tested immediately, breaking up a Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) funded ‘booze party’ as a starter. I showed them they could be held to a very high standard of accountability. I had enacted tough discipline and demanded the whole crew to ‘stop, think, and do what it takes’ to meet the standard. The crew of that ship has since excelled. ‘Division Officers went on to Department Head tours, and CO rides after that, the senior first class petty officers made chief, and the ship won the Battle E, even having run aground during the competitive year.’” We were able to build the ship back up as team.

CO1 demonstrated the conduct he expected from each of them, and did not relent until all learned and met expectations. Collectively, the study's COs assembled an enviable record of achievement and performance, and set in motion many of their junior officer's on their own paths to command.

### **Commanding Officers and Leadership Models**

Navy leaders develop future Navy leaders. According to Butler (2011, p. 43), Puryear (2008) notes successful leadership in the United States Navy adheres to a pattern.

Leaders in the Navy must be willing to put service before self; be willing to make tough decisions; have a 'sixth sense' for making sound decisions; be willing to challenge decisions of superiors when necessary; be well read in the theories of leadership; be a strong mentor; be capable of delegating authority; and be true in character. (Puryear, 2008 in Butler, 2011, p. 43)

The strength of the Naval Leadership approach is that it allows officers to amalgamate a range of leadership theories to assimilate into their practices. Education should touch on leadership theories from transactional to transformational, and express the concepts of Covenant Leadership espoused from Admiral Clark, former CNO. The Positive Approach to Leadership (Luthans et al., 2001) offers another approach to add to naval officers' preparations for command. Butler (2011) found that positive leaders had short-term and long-term effects on future leaders. Positive leaders infused their workers with "increased self-esteem, increased morale, reduced absenteeism, increased performance recognition, increased mission accomplishment, a more cohesive work environment, increased trust between followers and leaders, and a feeling of empowerment" (Butler, p. iii). Positive leaders influenced their workers to apply lessons they gained from their leadership by example. Butler found performance recognition led

to “increased job satisfaction” (Butler, p. 15). The COs of this study can attest to that truth.

### **The SWO Path and Preparation Work**

Although Allen, Hartman, Conklin, and Smith (2007) had surmised that nearly 50 percent of leaders were not pleased with their leader development program, the SWO path to command may be one of the best. The SWO career path incorporates all of the nodes determined by Compton (2008) to support leader development for high reliability organizations. The SWO pipeline of school to job and observed and evaluated performance to more school to new job and observed and evaluated performance, and to a new job with more school allowed leaders to “learn, stretch, grow, break new ground, observe, reflect, seek feedback and make the most of their learning opportunities” (Compton, 2008, p. 67-68). To establish long-term continuity, leader development must be continuous and aligned (Day & O’Connor, 2006). An old adage recommends staying with what works. Alcoholics Anonymous’ (AA) famous enjoinder declares, “It works when you work it.” This study’s findings support Larsson, Bartone, Bos-Bakx, Danielsson, Jelusic, Johansson, and Moelker (2006) initial confirmation and Bennis’s Seven Ages of a Leader (2005) concept. The findings also support the claim of Hall, Hannum, and McCarthy (2009) that diversity of experience was at least as important as depth of experience in predicting an executive’s future success.

Credible leadership is an essential practice for an effective CO of ships (Hoffman (2008). These COs also reflected attaining and maintaining their leadership credibility. In fulfilling Hogan and Kaiser (2005), each CO demonstrated their integrity: keeping their word, and fulfilling their promises. The CO’s authenticity and transparency built

the confidence of their people that they were being well served. Several COs expressed the danger of playing favorites and forgetting the special trust and confidence of their situation.

**Importance of the Chief.** A key player in many of the COs' early development has been the role of the Chief. For some it was as an early teacher of what a junior officer could only learn from the Chief. For others, early CPO encounters built their confidence in what COs could do, but also made them understand they needed to ask. (This researcher is not sure why that process of asking the Chief is required.) Most COs expressed their appreciation for the help the CPO, especially the Command Master Chief, added to their ability to get things done as XOs, and then, in helping a CO turnaround dragging Command. A solid and focused CO-XO-CMC team can imbue many with the vision and drive to complete the mission.

**Declining CPO quality?** Some COs expressed disappointment in that, as a community, the CPO mess had fallen off their level of performance and commitment (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, & Fleishman, 2000). Often, the cause has not been personal laziness or loss of desire, but due to the many directions and requirements, the Navy has placed on their senior enlisted leaders. Top level demands that CPOs "Get educated, do community service, go on an Individual Augmentee assignment, or manage a bunch of collateral duty programs" (CO13) have pulled many key division chiefs off track from being the key initiator of the development of a future CO when the young Ensign came to the division. Those same disturbances have also pulled Chiefs' attention away from the deckplates and their Sailors. In the researcher's opinion, that time away may be one cause of the misconduct now fought by programs rather than by people.

## **Rising Challenges–The Squeeze**

As COs have noted, ships and Sailors are being squeezed by past decisions. The effects of those choices may have peaked as the Fleet is on track to recover from neglect of the past twenty years (Eyer, 2010). As noted in Admiral Harvey’s Memo for the Record, reversals of declining shore support of maintenance, reductions in people, in both numbers and skills and experience, are being implemented. Reductions in ship counts with no reduction in operational demands have resulted in increases in OPTEMPO. Some have worried that Standards are slipping. This group of COs noted a lack of SWO emphasis on warfighting and tactics.

The importance of INFOCON (Information Operations Condition) including harnessing social media, monitoring connectivity, and turning “meddling” into “mentoring” must rise to priorities among Naval leaders. They can no longer treat every problem as a leadership problem that can be solved by training and implementing a new program. Every new program runs up against the dilemma described by Makadok (2003) How to balance competence with governance? Often, putting people in place, who have learned attention to detail and work to make things right, solves a “boatload” of leadership and management problems. CO16 did it for one ship. Others stand ready to do it for theirs.

## **Practices in Command**

Being CO demands the commander must remain authentic while at the same time playing many roles. Conger and Ready (2004) noted that real leaders must demonstrate adaptability by modeling many competencies, and adjust as required when the situation demands (McFall, 2012). A review of CO5’s command logbook demonstrates this

quality. The accomplishments and honors won by this group of COs attest to their practices honed during their developmental assignments. Concepts such as “marching the plant” (CO7) or called “MBWA (CO3, CO12, CO14, CO16) and working the Command Climate Surveys for what the CO could control help to sustain the credibility, and thus the confidence of Command. “We can get this done together.” COs emphasized the importance of knowing the crew. Talking to them as people, treating them as adults, holding them accountable are proven practices that auger success. Lax enforcement of standards, acceptance of less than maximum effort, or even just walking by a piece of trash on the deck are indicators where command attention is not getting through. Only COs can set the standard and the pace to correct these things before the “attitude” affects the whole ship. CO5 and CO13 can attest to the challenge of raising the Mineforce and CO10 can regale one with tales of the “Frigate mindset.”

COs’ experiences shape how they command. Applying planning and decision models, COs articulate the vision, set goals, assign projects, and monitor progress. Often they must provide extra insight or forceful leadership to accelerate people toward success defined by the vision. As the ship responds, COs may shift to a less directive style. COs exhibiting the rapid ability to shift focus and command in other arenas begins to shape their followers’ paths to command or other leadership positions.

This group of COs employed a sense of self-reflection. Touring their ships, checking on progress, always setting out the vision helped COs focus their ships on mission. Being a CO can be lonely, but a CO also is never truly alone. Several COs mentioned the CO breakfast group at an off-site. Often, ships struggle with similar issues, and some do better than others. COs who were unafraid, visited other ships and

discovered good ideas to bring back. Many get good ideas from interviewing their newly arrived personnel. The mandatory check in becomes not just a one-way conversation, but an effort to improve the whole command. The Navy has set up many programs to assist COs in being successful, especially in taking care of their Sailors and their families. CO16 praised the help he and the ship received from post-trauma counseling teams.

AT/FP requirements do take a toll on Sailors. Most ships are barely able to maintain enough qualified bodies to remain in reasonable duty, liberty and leave status. COs relished their time in command and at sea. Those with more Sea Time wore it as a badge of honor. They have “ship cred.” Not so with the ones CO5 called “National Treasures.” CO3 wondered if we do not have the emphasis right. The skills to succeed in the Beltway and with the Sailors at sea are different.

Two key concepts emerged for further study. One deals with making the transition from XO to CO in the same environment. Building the XO/PCO relationship will be the challenge of the COs for the near future. The new CO-XO team will be much closer in age and slightly less experienced than the CO-XO teams of most COs in this study. A major concern will be to answer the best ways to switch from being the enforcer as the XO to the man with the idea and vision? The CO must be able to move the organization ahead, not simply act as a caretaker. A future study should focus on that challenge.

**Decision Skills.** COs make decisions daily covering a range of issues. Several COs confessed they had not appreciated the number or magnitude of the decisions that have risen to the CO’s level. Often, they must display the wisdom of Solomon in choosing whom to rank higher among up to 10 equally vital and capable people due to

the forced ranking nature of the fitness report and evaluation system. The best COs employed a disciplined process and have honed their attention to detail to augment reports. For most shipboard events, COs can envision the situation and imagine what is happening and how the “battle” is going. COs employed three cooperative processes: a model close to rational acting evolved from the military planning process, a matter of mind for really demanding and rapid decisions based on the OODA concept, and processes based on *BLINK* or Klein’s Recognized Prime Decision model. They focus.

**Mariner Skills and Beltway Skills.** Mariner skills necessary for surviving and winning at sea are not necessarily the same as required to excel in the budget and battles in DC. As several COs exclaimed and others alluded, it may be time to divide the officers into operators and managers. In reviewing the stories of these COs, it seems that the crews do.

### **Results: Assessing Command Success**

COs know when things are going well and when they are not. COs must lead by being involved in the life of the ship through getting around, listening, and paying attention to details. Often, an experienced CO will be the only one who sees a small object on the horizon, or immediately recognizes the meaning and value of a tidbit of information, or understands how it fits into the picture. COs must answer daily “How well are my people doing things the way I think I have taught them to do?” A key tenet used by many is “Telling isn’t teaching.” Most COs know they were challenged to maintain composure when their crews had not done what they thought they had clearly communicated.

The phrase “I had a Band at my Change of Command” (Chatfield, 2009) is one way to assess success in command. COs master the art of developing self-efficacy. Through teaching, training, demanding their charges learn and perform and improve, COs help people make the ship better. Although many use the “INSURV” as a marker, the standards employed by INSURV are only measured as ships approach the inspection date once every five years. Theoretically, ships should be at or above those standards from commissioning. The life of the ship runs from builder’s acceptance trials, through training and operations, and on and returning from deployment. That cycle of maintenance, training, and rehearsal should prepare ships and their crews to return to Fleet operations and perform as well, or even better, than on their last deployment. The Surface Force has implemented a new policy that will have a team from the Type Commander conduct a “Mid-Cycle Materiel Assessment” as an INSURV-like event. The team will “measure materiel condition and train crews to standards” (Harvey 2012, Enclosure 8, p. 1).

A recently published study on the application of “Positive Leadership” methods as advocated by Luthans et al. (2001) recommended that the Positive approach be introduced at senior level professional military education (Butler, 2011). Luthans et al. identified what they termed “RICH” components of PAL: Realistic optimism, emotional Intelligence, Confidence (positive efficacy), and Hope. Although no informant mentioned any specific leadership theory, a reexamination of the applications of the Positive Approach indicated all 16 COs employed many facets of the PAL model.

## **Highlighting a Crisis in Credibility**

In a hierarchical organization such as the Navy, many people focus solely on the commanding officer and the impact the CO has on the ship. Another important aspect of analysis is the way that the COs established and maintained their relations with their Bosses, normally the DESRON Commander known as the “Commodore.” One of the underlying dangers of having been a CO, is that one tends to judge the performance of others from applying a Recognized Prime Decision model or the *Blink* concept to every happening on other ships. Commodores recall when they were COs and faced similar circumstances and were able to fight their ways out. They are often apt to give directions rather than process incoming reports. However, as this study has demonstrated, the challenges might have been the same, but they were still different. The crew, ship, budget, and mission are all changed. Porter’s model (2008) forces one to realize that any number of factors have changed and old solutions may not fit the new situation. Luckily, some still apply.

The COs of this study emphasized priorities of knowing, doing, and showing their people what was right. They demanded execution according to established procedures; praised every victory, and developed ships and crews, and future COs who were gaining self-efficacy as they performed and were recognized. That same feeling from inside the lifelines is in danger of eroding as upper level leadership has begun to focus on individual deficiencies as indicators of the existence of fleet wide problems, not just the potential of those problems.

In the past ten years, mandatory training has focused on Responsible Use of Alcohol, Responsible Personal Behavior, Sexual Health Promotion, Equal Opportunity

including Religious Accommodation, Sexual Harassment, Grievance Procedures, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (with refresher training), Trafficking in Persons, Suicide Prevention, Improving Personal Financial Management (with Personal Financial Management and Money Management), Operational Stress Control, Diversity, Domestic Violence, Law of War, Navy Policy on Hazing, Introduction to the Navy's Fraternalization Policy, Family Readiness, Code of Conduct, Anger Management, the Navy's Drug Abuse Policy, Navy's Tobacco Cessation Policy, Operational Risk Management, OPSEC, and Preparing for the Physical Readiness Test (PRT). None of these efforts are misguided, or wrongly focused, but each affect every Naval organizations' commanding officers who must balance the trainer preparation, training audience and attendance, training delivery, program management, and feedback.

Additionally, Flag level decisions in budget management have led to a declining ability of ships to execute their designed wartime missions. Actions are now in place to begin to reverse these trends. But the other significant challenge mentioned by many COs is the feeling of being Micro-managed or over-managed. When combined with a culture that has embraced "Zero tolerance" for almost every mistake, commanding officers can get to a point of feeling suffocated by the attention and "hand wringing" from above. Some of the direction demonstrates a lack of credibility and a breakdown of trust between seniors and juniors. In some cases, only the juniors involved were held accountable for situations resulting from decisions made by their senior once or twice removed. Several COs emphasized the importance of speaking truth to power—being able to tell the Boss when the situation is not as perceived. The important corollary is to remember to "Listen when you get there."

Trust is the glue for effective command. Credibility is an essential ingredient of trust (Hoffman, 2008). Trust is built on relationships and knowing what one can expect the other party to do. As the *Wall Street Journal* editorialized years ago: “men will not long trust leaders who feel themselves beyond accountability for what they do. And when men lose confidence and trust in those who lead, order disintegrates into chaos and purposeful ships into uncontrollable derelicts” (*Wall Street Journal*; May 1952, quoted in Mack & Konetzni, 1982, p. 5). Senior officers must make a concentrated effort to rekindle the two-way relationships necessary for rebuilding credibility and ensure their actions match their words to restore trust.

### **Limitations**

The study contains several limitations that may limit its effect on energizing systemic changes in the selection and preparation for those who will attain command of Navy ships. Due to limited resources, which prevented much travel, and the limited availability and time to conduct interviews, only sixteen informants are recorded and reported in this study. Data is available for continued analysis as new evidence emerges from recent changes in directions to commanders. The researcher intends to continue the study as part of a larger effort. No time was available to do more. Additionally, the NVivo program and tutorials were not as helpful as the researcher had imagined the program to be. He never learned to process the coding and ordering of data and employed collections of Excel spreadsheets. He also did not have the funds to continue exploration with a quantitative purpose and employ the results in an action research endeavor.

The informants were self-selected and from a “Fleet concentration area” so many other officers who commanded since 2000 were not available. The researcher believes that the limited population did not appreciably change the conclusions of this study. The population initially focused on finding former CRUDES COs, but was expanded to include officers who had commanded AMPHIBs at the Commander level. The study also relied on self-reported performance which Makadok (2003) had noted might be biased. (You are never as free as you think you are, never as burdened as you think you are, as ready as you think you are, as bad...) Additionally, since the study attempted to be a holistic study of Command some findings may be too specific or isolated to make broad recommendations.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The researcher was surprised by the paucity of published doctoral studies of command. Many areas for further investigation surfaced during this study. Follow-on studies could investigate other concepts that shape command experiences such as:

- A study that investigates effectiveness of the newly established policy of XO-to-CO Fleet Ups versus two separate tours, one for XO, then, selection and assignment to CO.
- A study that follows the transition from XO to CO in the same environment.
- A study that expands the population to include other officers who “Command at sea” such as squadron commanders (COMDESRONs and/or COMPHIBRONs). Another study could compare the responses between COs

who commanded East Coast ships vs. West Coast ships; or comparable challenges based on the ships homeports.

- A quantitative study that measures reactions to specific attributes discovered in this study. For example, one could relate the effect of time at sea or time away from the sea on performance in command. Or, one could evaluate the strength of CPO involvement on success in command. Or, one could attempt to quantify the importance of the contributors to an officer's readiness for command by operationalizing time at sea, time underway, the effect of specific events, the manner they react with other officers or how they treat senior enlisted or maintain the commitment from junior enlisted personnel.
- A combined set of studies tracing the results versus expectations of major policy shifts based on changing priorities, historical incidents, or Ship Manning Plans.
- A study should follow the results of applying Butler (2011) and attempt to validate the use of PAL as an appropriate Naval leadership model.
- A study that explores junior officers' attitudes and proclivities to Command. Are there still officers who desire Command "out there"? One tack could be "Maintaining realistic optimism in the Navy's future: Is hope fading?"
- A study that investigates the seniors' appetite for more and detailed information.
- A study that explores Command failures to identify missed opportunities for interventions.
- A study that attempts to quantify the shift in challenges to Command at sea.

## **Conclusion**

This study explored COs' perceptions of the challenges in command of U.S. Navy ships since 2000. Command is personal; no one clear model exists to Command. But time proven practices of holding standards and meeting commitments work. COs must play to their strengths and be authentic. Command is a full-time commitment. COs of ships must balance mission, people, and programs to sustain warfighting readiness. Interestingly, only two COs made passing mention of generational, or gender- based, or sexual orientation problems. Most had issues with their bosses.

The SWO path to command works. Allen, Hartman, Conklin, and Smith (2007) discovered that only 50 percent of leaders were satisfied with their leader development programs. Not so with this group of COs. All claimed that their preparation and various paths shaped them for success in command. As this study began, SWOs held major four star positions as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, commanders of Joint Commands, and as the Commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command. Additionally, ship COs have fired Tomahawks and captured pirates, and their ships served as platforms for hostage rescue missions. COs have led Navy ships in responses to major disasters in Japan, Indonesia, Haiti, Turkey, and Pakistan.

Command is tough; COs say it is tougher today. However, that toughness is not due to the quality of people, exactly. The current group of Officers, Sailors, and Chiefs has not been well prepared to succeed at sea. Much turmoil in the Surface Fleet has been caused by Flag budgetary decisions to cancel schools and reduce manning without considering operational requirements. Choices have led to degradations in training, maintenance, and self-sufficiency. Additionally, the ships have more systems that

inexperienced crews can appropriately maintain. Several COs as junior officers counseled against the changes but were suppressed by their bosses. Those experiences may have set up the crisis in trust.

COs make a difference, even in resource constrained environments. The COs in this study, chosen to restore confidence in a crew following the loss of the CO, exemplified Chatfield's (2009) findings of self-awareness, reflection, and self-efficacy. Re-establishing a ship's honor from these conditions calls for leaders who demand excellence daily and do not equivocate on standards. Confidence or improved self-efficacy develops through recognized performance (Wood & Bandura, 1989). COs can influence positively by being extremely demanding, yet remaining fair, encouraging, and respectful. CO1, twice, and CO3 helped ships recover from an unplanned relief of their COs. Self-efficacy from command develops from practice and proven performance. All COs will tell you that time at sea is good. COs gain more comfort as their self-efficacy evolves enroute to, and in, command.

Navy leaders develop Navy leaders. Positive and early exposure to good Navy leaders (COs) sets future COs on the right course for Command. Good early exposure to quality senior enlisted personnel builds trust and confidence in them the rest of the way. Command is the ultimate coaching job. Command is tough, and getting tougher. Bosses have a knack of making it harder, not easier. An "insatiable" appetite of seniors for information may be causing erosion of trust and confidence in both directions, starting from the bottom. Trust is the glue of Command (Harvey, 2011). Admiral Harvey's effort to return to SWO "glory" (e.g., re-constituting a SWOS DOC, improving enroute enlisted training, restoring manning cuts, and funding more maintenance) allows adhering to high

expectations of performance. He expects “No excuses” or shoulder shrugs from the bosses in answering, “We cannot afford to fix, build, or improve.” Admiral Harvey has given reasons for SWOs to hope for a better future. They just have to “make it.” As demonstrated by CO16, the effects of previous funding, training, maintenance reductions can be overcome, one ship, one crew, one event, one CO at a time.

Each of the informants noted the job was still doable, and worth the investment to become the Captain and shape young lives, even their own. The path and the struggle are worth it. COs’ call to young officers, “Stay with it, believe in yourself, don’t give up.” The journey would have been worth it even if the officer had never achieved command at sea. The people, the experiences, and the knowledge of facing and meeting challenges developed each CO’s personal self-efficacy, adaptability, and resilience. If you are on the path to Command at sea, do not forget their unanimous rejoinder as you reach XO:

As XO, be the XO, not the PCO.

As CO, Command, have fun, really!

The participants in this study did!

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## **APPENDIX A. GLOSSARY**

### **DOD Terms**

#### **1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act**

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, sponsored by Sen. Barry Goldwater and Rep. Bill Nichols, caused major defense reorganization, the most significant since the National Security Act of 1947. Operational authority was centralized through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs as opposed to the service chiefs. The chairman was designated as the principal military advisor to the president, National Security Council and secretary of defense. The act established the position of vice-chairman and streamlined the operational chain of command from the president to the secretary of defense to the unified commanders.

Since 1986, Goldwater-Nichols has made tremendous changes in the way DOD operates—joint operations are the norm—Arabian Gulf, Zaire, Haiti, and Bosnia. Implementation of the act is an on-going project with Joint Vision 2010 (1996) and Joint Vision 2020 (2000). Both documents emphasize that to be the most effective force we must be fully joint: intellectually, operationally, organizationally, doctrinally, and technically. The joint force, because of its flexibility and responsiveness, will remain the key to operational success in the future. (National Defense University Library, 2000)

#### **Accountability**

The obligation imposed by law or lawful order or regulation on an officer or other person for keeping accurate record of property, documents, or funds. The person having this obligation may or may not have actual possession of the property, documents, or funds. Accountability is concerned primarily with records, while responsibility is concerned primarily with custody, care, and safekeeping. See also responsibility. (Joint Staff, JP 1)

#### **Command**

1. The authority that a commander in the armed forces lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank or assignment. Command includes the authority and responsibility for effectively using available resources and for planning the employment of, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling military forces for the accomplishment of assigned missions. It also includes responsibility for health, welfare, morale, and discipline of assigned personnel.
2. An order given by a commander; that is, the will of the commander expressed for the purpose of bringing about a particular action.

3. A unit or units, an organization, or an area under the command of one individual. Also called CMD. See also area command; combatant command; combatant command (command authority). (Joint Staff, JP 1)

### **Responsibility**

1. The obligation to carry forward an assigned task to a successful conclusion. With responsibility goes authority to direct and take the necessary action to ensure success.
2. The obligation for the proper custody, care, and safekeeping of property or funds entrusted to the possession or supervision of an individual. See also accountability. (Joint Staff, JP 1)

### **Transformation**

Transformation is foremost a continuing process that does not have an end point. It is meant to create or anticipate the future. Transformation is meant to deal with the co-evolution of concepts, processes, organizations and technology. Change in any one of these areas necessitates change in all.

Transformation is meant to create new competitive areas and new competencies. It is meant to identify, leverage and even create new underlying principles for the way things are done. Transformation is meant to identify and leverage new sources of power. The overall objective of these changes is simply: sustained American competitive advantage in warfare. (DOD Transformation website)

## **APPENDIX B. NAVAL GUIDANCE AND DIRECTIVES FOR COMMAND**

### **Excerpt from CNO Message. OPNAV 231545Z Sep 11 to COs**

3. Our Navy's ability to defend national interests has always depended on the initiative and resourcefulness of our commanding officers. Command is one of the cornerstones of the very foundation upon which our Navy rests. You have been entrusted with the "charge of command." You were selected for command by senior officers who judged you worthy, ready, and the best qualified to lead sailors, and they did so based upon sustained superior performance over the course of your respective careers. To whom much is given, much is expected. I expect commanding officers at all levels to be fully fluent in the three essential principles of command—authority, responsibility, and accountability. You have been provided with the authority commensurate with your responsibility—exercise your authority wisely. With responsibility comes accountability. I expect that you will maintain the high standards required of commanding officers, and hold the members of your command to the same high standards that I hold you. Accountability is based on trust. I trust in you; you must build this same trust with the people in your command. Build this trust through your personal interactions and demonstrate your character through professional competence, good judgment, fairness, common sense, and respect, both up and down the chain of command. When this trust and accountability are institutionalized in the routine of command, the result is our collective long-term success. Fostering a climate of trust and accountability is your duty as commanding officers in the United States Navy. Do not let me down. (OPNAV 231545Z SEP 11)

## APPENDIX C. CONRAD LETTER

The following letter has appeared in every version of the guidebook *Command at Sea*. Based on the writings of Joseph Conrad, it expresses the concept of Command.

### **The Prestige, Privilege, and the Burden of Command**

Only a seaman realizes to what extent an entire ship reflects the personality and of one individual, her Commanding Officer. To a landsman this is not understandable, and sometimes it is even difficult for us to comprehend,-but it is so.

A ship at sea is a distant world in herself and in consideration of the protracted and distant operations of the fleet units the Navy must place great power, responsibility and trust in the hands of those leaders chosen for command.

In each ship there is one man who, in the hour of emergency or peril at sea, can turn to no other man. There is one who alone is ultimately responsible for the safe Navigation, engineering performance, accurate gun firing and morale of his ship. He is the Commanding Officer. He is the ship.

This is the most difficult and demanding assignment in the Navy. There is not an instant during his tour of duty as Commanding Officer that he can escape the grasp of command responsibility. His privileges in view of his obligations are most ludicrously small; nevertheless command is the spur, which has given the Navy its great leaders.

It is a duty which most richly deserves the highest, time-honored title of the seafaring world—"CAPTAIN."

(Mack & Konetzni, 1982, p. xi)

## **APPENDIX D. NAVY ETHOS**

### **Navy Ethos 2008**

We are the United States Navy, our Nation's sea power—ready guardians of peace, victorious in war.

We are professional Sailors and Civilians—a diverse and agile force exemplifying the highest standards of service to our Nation, at home and abroad, at sea and ashore.

Integrity is the foundation of our conduct; respect for others is fundamental to our character; decisive leadership is crucial to our success.

We are a team, disciplined and well-prepared, committed to mission accomplishment. We do not waver in our dedication and accountability to our Shipmates and families.

We are patriots, forged by the Navy's core values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment. In times of war and peace, our actions reflect our proud heritage and tradition.

We defend our Nation and prevail in the face of adversity with strength, determination, and dignity.

We are the United States Navy.

([http://www.Navy.mil/features/ethos/Navy\\_ethos2.html](http://www.Navy.mil/features/ethos/Navy_ethos2.html))

## APPENDIX E. LISTS OF COMMANDING OFFICER QUALITIES

Connolly	Burke	Zumwalt	<i>Command at Sea</i>	Stockdale	Sheppard	Stavridis	Abrashoff	Wray
Ambition Competence Decisiveness Drive Fighting spirit Foresight	Authority	Judgment	Desire Moral & Physical	Courage- Moralist- know what good is	Take care of your people	Respect	Take command Lead by example Listen aggressively	To be well obeyed, must be perfectly esteemed
Humanitarianism Integrity Intelligence Judgment Military character Persuasiveness Reliability	Discipline	Opened potential of Joint	Moral leadership	Jurist- Fair, firm, disciplined, consistent	Expect excellence	Routine & Disciplined execution	Communicate purpose and meaning	Scrupulously honest
	Loyalty	Cautioned on "narrow- minded" interservice rivalry	Personal relations with seniors. Subordination. Loyalty.	Teacher Steward	PMS Constant vigilance- forehandedness	Study and gain knowledge to lead with confidence	Create a climate of trust Look for results not salutes	Set the example Look smart and professional
	Responsibility	Union rules dividing destroyermen from amphibious sailors, tailhook aviators from land based operators, "Black shoes" from "Brown shoes"	Personal relations with juniors. New CO's give all officers fresh starts. Techniques of counseling and communication	Philosopher- "endurance of the soul"	Teach and check, give responsibility to grow confidence- "Self efficacy" comes from performance	Beware and deal with "angst" of inspections	Take calculated risks Go beyond standard procedure Build up your people	Be courteous to each other Care for the crew Seek to develop their people
Responsibility	Willingness to perform	Men and morale- helping them know "Why"?	Role of officers in training Command is a personalized calling.		Communicate Ask what others are seeing about me?	Service	Generate unity	Know their people
Ruggedness		Discipline of Intelligent obedience Sincerity no substitute for intelligent appraisal of problems. Problems of society follow to services Demands of youth, needs of civilian society, dignity of personnel 4.0 is minimum grade on Personal Accountability	Virtue, Honor, Patriotism CO's must be sensitive to the challenges of the environment  Command Philosophy- fraternity. Metamorphosis. Tone			Endure wear and tear of the sea	Improve your people's quality of life	Be brave, not only physically, but morally  Demeanor: calm, steady, unflappable Study the trade

## APPENDIX F. FINDINGS OF STUDIES ON COMMANDING OFFICERS

LMET- McBer	CMD Excellence	Awadzi-Calloway	Beck	Montor et al.
Conceptualizes	Builds esprit de corps	Challenge the process	Longer in time as leader—more servant leader one becomes	Morale
Delegates	Builds positive external relationships	Enabling others to act	Leaders who volunteer of themselves	Integrity
Develops Subordinates	Develops strong wardroom	Encourage the heart	Build trusting relationships that enable influence	Self-Discipline
Disciplines	Develops XO	Self-efficacy	Altruistic mindset	Judgment
Influences.	Ensures training is effective	High EQ	Interpersonal competence	Pressure
Maximizes Use of Resources	Gets crew to support command philosophy			Motivation
Monitors Results	Gets out and about			Professionalism
Plans and Organizes	Influences successfully.			
Positive Expectations	Keeps cool under pressure			
Realistic	Staffs to optimize performance			
Rewards	Targets key issues			
Self-control	Values chiefs quarters			
Sets Goals and Performance Standards				
Takes Initiative				
Team Builds				
Understands.				

## APPENDIX G. ALIGNMENT AMONG PROBLEM, PURPOSE, AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Introduction to the Problem	Purpose of the Study	Research Questions
<p>In the past two years, the U.S. Navy had to replace nine commanders of surface combatant ships due to loss of trust and confidence in their ability to command. Those commanders succumbed to the challenge of command.</p> <p>This dissertation explores how recent commanding officers of Navy ships describe how they were prepared to face the challenges of command, how they met the expectations, and how they assessed they were successful in command.</p>	<p>The purpose of this qualitative case study inquiry will be to discover individual commanding officer's perceptions of challenges they faced while in Command of a U.S. Navy cruiser-destroyer type ship in the 21st century.</p> <p>The study will also seek to ascertain how different commanders were prepared to adapt to the historical, generational, and professional demands experienced during their command tours.</p> <p>Additionally, the exploration will attempt to identify indicators for success in meeting the challenges in command at sea in the 21st century.</p>	<p>How do former U. S. Navy cruiser-destroyer force commanding officers of the 21st century describe how they met the challenges of command at sea?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What challenges did COs anticipate they would face in their tour in command at sea and what prepared COs to address these challenges?</li> <li>• What new challenges occurred and how did the preparation help COs meet the new challenges?</li> <li>• What factors did COs use to judge their success in command?</li> <li>• What advice would COs offer for those desiring to command at sea?</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX H. FIELD TEST

To support the data collection plan, a field test has been conducted using the proposed Sample Interview scheme. The proposed Interview Protocol was sent to a selected group of former Navy ships' commanding officers and Destroyer Group Commanders who commanded pre-9/11/2001. Each has unique perspectives of command at sea. The original proposed Interview Protocol is attached as Appendix I.

Each commented on the need for such a study and offered suggestions as to how the proposed instrument could be improved. Most suggested ensuring the questions were provided well ahead of the scheduled interview. Several noted that the attack on USS *Cole* rather than 9/11 was the “wake-up call” for the U.S. Navy.

### Participants in Field Test

Thomas J. Brown, Captain, U.S. Navy (Retired) (no relation)–Commanded USS *Anchorage* (LSD-36), Homeport: San Diego, CA, 11 Sept 1992–24 Mar 1994. He deployed to OPERATION CONTINUED HOPE (Somalia) Jan 1994-Mar 1994. He reported his tour was in three parts: six month preparation for a major shipyard overhaul and follow on shipyard period (Engineering Light-Off Exam–LOE), six month workups from shipyard to deployment (Operational Propulsion Plant Exam–OPPE), and deployment to Somalia. Thus, he reported that his command experience spanned engineering, training, and operations—a rare mix in one command cycle that required three different styles of leadership.

Mark Flaherty, Captain, U.S. Navy (Retired). Commanded USS *O'Bannon* 1986-1988 and USS *Truxtun* (CGN 35) in the 1990s.

Earl J. Fought, Captain, U.S. Navy (Retired). Commanded a DD, was a DESRON Chief of Staff, and later CO at Fleet Training Group, and is currently the Executive Director of Fleet Training Group, Atlantic. He is a National War College alumnus and a U.S. Naval Academy graduate.

John J. Kearley, Captain, U.S. Navy (Retired). Commanded USS *Elmer Montgomery* (FF-1082) in Mayport, FL from April 1986 until September 1988. He also served as Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans for COMCRUDESGRU TWO/ AMERICA Battle Group, from May 1991 until July 1993. During that time, he was assigned to command, as an interim Commander, of the United Nations Red Sea Maritime Interception Operations (MIO) Task Force in the Red Sea, enforcing UN Sanctions against Iraq, following Desert Storm I.

Lawrence V. Kester Captain, U.S. Navy (Retired). Commanded USS *Preble* (DDG 46) Jan 91–Nov 91 in Norfolk, VA that included a deployment to Desert Shield/Desert Storm and as a participant in Naval On-call Forces Mediterranean (precursor to STANAVFORMED). He decommissioned *Preble* and, then commanded USS *Dahlgren* (DDG 43) Dec 91-Jul 92 in Norfolk, VA also through decommissioning during the drawdown of the 1990's. *Dahlgren*. He later served as Executive Officer at Tactical Training Group Atlantic, which trained all commanders, and staffs who deployed in commands at sea. He noted that his previous experience in *Coontz*-class DDGs that included major deployments to Vietnam, the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, and Central America gave him great confidence in commanding *Preble* and *Dahlgren*.

Jim Miller, Captain, U.S. Navy (Retired). Commanded three ships and a Destroyer Squadron between 1974 and the mid 1980's. He was a fellow at the Brookings Institution, holds a Master's Degree from University of North Carolina, and still teaches graduate courses in Systems Engineering and Human Systems Integration at the University of California at San Diego (UCSD).

Gerald O'Donnell, Captain, U.S. Navy (Retired). Commanded USS *Chancellorsville* CG-62, CO USS *Thatch* FFG-43, CO USS *Tawakoni* ATF-114, and served as Chief of Staff for Commander U.S. Naval Forces Central Command.

Richard (Dick) Pearsall, Captain, U.S. Navy (Retired). Commanded USS *Thorn* in the 1980s and was a Destroyer Squadron Commander. As a Squadron Commander, he said he felt he might be able to help some officers be more effective COs. Over the course of two squadron commander tours, he oversaw the command performance of 35 different officers.

## APPENDIX I. ORIGINAL PROPOSED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The initial proposed instrument sent to Field Test participants:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_ Command and Time Frame: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: David K Brown Video Tape Number: \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of this interview is to inquire about the challenges you faced in command. We may find these Bacon cartoons helpful, but I want you to feel free to explore or lead in any direction.

Discuss your path to command and key events and motivation.

What ways have the changes in operational and environmental expectations shifted the nature of challenges faced in command?

Did you think you were well prepared and what could have been done to better prepare you for your tour?

Were you able to find any artifacts you are willing to share with me to do cross-comparisons with others' like products, including my own?

Do you have any sage advice to offer future generations of commander at sea?

To whom should I talk, to get a better feeling about this era of command?

Thank very much for your time and thoughts.

Following feedback from Field test members, the Interview Protocol was adjusted and is included as Appendix J as the Interview Preparation Form/ Guide

## **APPENDIX J. INTERVIEW PREPARATION FORM/ GUIDE**

The purpose of this interview is to inquire about the challenges you faced in Command at sea as well as the challenges you faced while qualifying and attaining command. The outline of questions below are to provide the minimum structure and a starting point for the interview. We may also find these Bacon cartoons (Links on next pages) helpful for brainstorming or reminiscing your most memorable challenges/experiences. I want you to feel free to explore or lead in any direction regarding your Command at sea or path to it.

I will work with you to set up an appropriate time and location for the interview. With your permission, the interview will be recorded on video tape to aid further analysis.

1. When did you first know that you wanted to or could Command/fight a warship (event, person, experience, dream, etc.)?
2. Discuss your path to command: key people, key events, and motivation.
  - a. What barriers did you face and what did you do to overcome/minimize them in your path to Command?
  - b. Did you think you were well prepared for Command and what specifically could have been done to better prepare you for your tour?
3. Compare your command experience with what you expected based on your observations of previous COs or other factors that influenced your conclusions—e.g., anecdotes, hearsay, research, metrics or measures, etc. Include where in the Deployment/ FRTP cycle you began and ended your tour—e.g., in yard, in work ups, or on deployment.

4. Since *Cole*/ 9-11/War on Terrorism implementation, what Navy-wide or Surface Navy specific policies and/or procedures have been implemented that have influenced your ability to command effectively, either negatively or positively?
5. What ways have the changes in the operational and environmental expectations shifted the nature of challenges faced in Command? How could we measure them?
6. What parameters did you note to assess your performance in command? How did you drive your confidence in Command?
7. Would you be willing to share any artifacts (Command Philosophies, Letters from Command, etc.) to enable me to do cross-comparisons with others' like products, including my own?
8. What is the one thing about your experience as a Commanding Officer you would tell:
  - a. A room of Department Heads about Command at sea?
  - b. Prospective Executive Officers
  - c. Prospective Commanding Officers?

Thank you very much for your time and your thoughts!

NOTES:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_ Command and Time Frame: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: David K Brown Video Tape Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Commander Jeff Bacon, USN (Retired) graciously allowed me to use “anything I want” from his website. I chose several cartoons that represented challenges COs might find during their tours in Command at sea.

*Broadside*® site:

<http://www.broadside.net/>

Specific cartoons:

1. The First report:

<http://www.broadside.net/2011andbefore/10080231.htm>

2. Electronic Navigation – the next phase:

<http://www.broadside.net/2011andbefore/07071627.htm>

3. Sea Detail on the Bridge:

<http://www.broadside.net/2011andbefore/10062826.htm>

4. Lively conversation:

<http://www.broadside.net/2011andbefore/09081733.htm>

5. Plane Guard

<http://www.broadside.net/2011andbefore/09010501.htm>

6. Night Orders

<http://www.broadside.net/2011andbefore/06120449.htm>

The Researcher asked each participant to make a drawing or a graph of the following:

My command experience level of challenge vs. my first CO's level of challenge

How my time in command mapped vs. the 27-month nominal Surface combatant cycle

How would I rate my ship's performance tracking it through my tour from beginning to end?

## APPENDIX K. COMMANDING OFFICER TIME IN COMMAND

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
CO1			PC	PC	PC (I)									LSD	LSD	LSD (I)		
CO2						DDG	DDG						CG	CG				
CO3													FFG	FFG	FFG	DDG(I)		
CO4							DDG	DDG	DDG							CG	CG	
CO5			MCM	MCM			DDG	DDG	DDG									
CO6		DD	DD	DD			CG	CG	CG									
CO7	DD	DD	DD				CG	CG	CG									
CO8														FFG	FFG	FFG		
CO9															FFG	FFG		
CO10										FFG	FFG	FFG						
CO11			MHC	MHC	MHC			LSD	LSD					LHD	LHD	LHD		
CO12														FFG	FFG			
CO13									MHC	MHC	MHC				FFG	FFG		
CO14						PC	PC	PC						DDG	DDG	DDG		
CO15							PC	PC	PC					LSD	LSD			
CO16										DDG	DDG	DDG					CG	CG

*Notes:*

1. Sep 2000 USS *Cole* attacked
2. Sep 2001- "9/11"
3. CRUDES includes FFG, DDG, CG.
4. AMPHIB includes LSD and LHD.
5. Mine Force includes MCM and MHC.
6. An (I) indicates Interim Command.

PC
Mine Force
CRUDES
AMPHIB

## APPENDIX L. COMMANDING OFFICER DATA

CO	COMM SOURCE	ADV DEGREE	War College	AFS/		CGN	CVN	DD	DDG	FFG	LHD	LPD	LSD	MCM	MHC	PC	ISIC	FLT	SWOS	BUPERS	JOINT
				AE	CG												STAFF	STAFF	STAFF		
CO1	ECP	x	x						x				x			x		x			x
CO2	USNA	x			x	x			x									x			x
CO3	USNA	x	x		x				x	x							x	x			x
CO4	USNA	x	x		x	x			x												x
CO5	OCS	x	x*		x	x			x					x						x	x
CO6	ROTC	x	x		x	x		x	x										x		x
CO7	USNA	x			x	x		x										x			x
CO8	ROTC	x	x		x		x	x		x											x
CO9	ROTC	x	x	x	x					x							x				x
CO10	ROTC	x	x					x	x	x							x				x
CO11	ROTC	x	x					x		x	x				x		x	x	x		x
CO12	OCS	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x		x		x		x		x		x
CO13	USNA	x	x		x		x		x	x					x		x	x			x
CO14	USNA	x	x		x				x							x				x	x
CO15	USNA	x	x								x	x	x			x					x
CO16	USNA	x	x		x			x	x	x										x	x

*Notes:*

1. Data shows commissioning source (ECP-Enlisted Commissioning Program, USNA-U.S. Naval Academy, OCS-Officers Candidate School, ROTC-Reserve Officer Training Corps)
2. Advanced degrees,
3. War College (Joint Professional Military Education (JPME))
4. Ship types, (CG- Cruiser, CGN-Nuclear Powered Cruiser, CVN-Aircraft Carrier, DD-Destroyer, FFG-Frigate, LHD-Amphibious Dock, LPD-Amphibious Transport Dock, LSD-Landing Ship Dock, MCM- Mine Countermeasures Ship, MHC- Minehunter Coastal, PC- Patrol Coastal)
5. Staff assignments (ISIC-Immediate Superior in Chain of Command, Fleet, SWOS (Surface Warfare Officers School),
6. Joint assignments to meet 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act.
7. IA (Individual Augmentee)
8. Blue indicates a Command Tour.

## **APPENDIX M. INDIVIDUAL COMMANDING OFFICER INTERVIEW DATA**

The following sections are the responses from the 16 Commanding Officers.

1. The Old Sage
2. The Philosopher/ Teacher
3. The Legacy
4. The Survivor
5. The “Plugger”
6. The Executioner
7. The “Busy Bee”
8. The Mentee
9. The Voyager
10. The Adventurer
11. The Facilitator
12. The Heritage
13. The Sailor
14. The Warrior
15. The Character
16. The Hero

## **CO1. The Old Sage**

CO1 was a prior enlisted officer who rose through the ranks and commanded at the Lieutenant (LT) level prior to the 2000 attack on USS *Cole*, as well as at the Commander Command level about 10 years later. As a LT, CO1 commanded a Patrol Coastal (PC) between September 1997 and June 1999; and then was assigned as interim commander of a second PC, June 1999–December 1999 after the CO was relieved after running the ship aground. CO1 later commanded a surface combatant (LSD) from January 2008 to May 2009. Additionally, CO1 was tagged to step back into the breach six months after his commander command tour (December 2009–January 2010) when both the CO and XO were reassigned as the ship returned from deployment.

### **Personal Background/ Motivation**

CO1 had served a full enlistment and observed the “power of a good commander” to lead his ship. CO1 won the opportunity to attend college and become a commissioned officer through a Navy sponsored Enlisted Commissioning Program. On CO1’s first ship, an “AMPHIB,” as a junior officer and division officer, CO1 served as the Officer-in-Charge (OIC) of a Landing Craft Air Cushioned (LCAC) Detachment off Somalia. “This early responsibility struck the flame of the possibility that I could command at sea. I observed many issues about command, including seeing a CO get relieved during that tour.”

CO1 relished in the concept of the “Navy as a Meritocracy– you can go as far as your desire and ability–and further, with additional luck and timing.” CO1 then served as an instructor at the Division Officer course of Surface Warfare Officers School

Command (SWOS). At the time, the Navy was placing in service a new class of smaller ships – Patrol Coastal (PC's) – that opened the opportunity for Lieutenants to command at sea. The quality of folks going to Command had impressed him greatly, so CO1 aimed for selection to early command during his first Department Head tour.

### **Path to Command / Preparation/ JO Experiences/ Key People / Events**

CO1 was selected and assigned to PC command that allowed him to gain valuable knowledge and experience for later command at sea. As a bonus in development, CO1 experienced the opportunity to take over ship that had run aground, commanding from June–December 1999. He described that experience as absolutely, “rewarding...I got to fix the ship, fix the crew,” and even more certain “cemented the love for Command” and “being part of a successful team.”

CO1 then served as the XO over a brand new DDG for three years. His tour began with forming the precommissioning crew. He was one of the “plankowners” as a member of the crew that placed the ship in commission. He continued his XO assignment by completing the first operating period known as “Shakedown” and participating in combat systems qualification and testing scheme and post shakedown availability. This experience certified CO1's bona fides as a destroyerman with battle ready AEGIS experience. CO1 then served as the Flag Secretary at Commander, U.S. Second Fleet, one of five three star Fleet commands. By the time CO1 went to Commander Command, he had been on nine deployments.

As far as barriers to CO1's path to command, “As prior enlisted, age was a factor in all these decisions.” In reality, CO1 had to deal with age vs. promotion group:

I had to Command at the O-5 level to qualify for promotion O-6, and an immediate chance to be flag was not possible without Commander Command. Since I was older than my contemporaries, following my Joint Professional Military Education/ War College/ and Joint tour, I asked for the shortest pipeline for command, and the Bureau obliged, sending me back to AMPHIBs.

He was not satisfied with tactical training at the CO Level:

An inordinate amount of time in the pipeline helped with day-to-day grind, but from the pipeline, I did not feel adequately prepared in weapons, tactics, and fighting the ship. My AEGIS experience helped in learning what to do.... The command pipeline was more about admin, not enough emphasis on tactics/ warfighting. SWOs are not good at weeding people out who cannot fight or manage. We have no measures for tactical ability, combat decision-making, or Tactical leadership, but lots of emphasis on program execution and management. Submariners seem more prepared as warriors, likewise with our aviation brethren.

### **Command Experience(s)/ Challenges**

CO1 commanded a combatant between 2008 and 2010, and two PCs in 1998 and 1999. CO1 noted, “All three command tours reinforced the importance of early command.” CO1 joined the first PC at end of deployment, and took over a small group (crew of 30). The PCs worked for Naval Special Warfare Command so they had “adequate—but benign— command attention and quality support, both materiel and personnel.” The crew knew that “mission accomplishment was key.”

CO1 took the ship through “pre-deployment work up, a short shipyard availability, and a South American deployment.” The ship operated in “Joint Combined dets as part of the Counter-Narco-Terrorism Task Force”—groups of U.S. Special Operations Forces and Interagency representatives with partner Navies/Armies and law enforcement officials. CO1 led two major Joint-Combined training exercises during the deployment.

As a LT, CO1 was “given a set of orders and equipped with the trust and confidence of his leadership to complete the mission.” Following a successful tour on the

PC, CO1 was assigned to command a second PC following that ship's grounding. "A grounding breaks more than ship- also the crew...'Fire everybody' said the bosses. CO1 argued for time to assess the situation. "The challenge for that ship was to put the ship back together- physically and morally."

The shipyard went to work to rebuild the physical structure of ship. CO1 said, "I gave the remaining crew 24 hours to determine how and show why ship went aground ... and give it to me." The results found "ground truth" and CO1 began the work to rebuild faith and trust among the crew. CO1's effort to establish accountability would be tested immediately, breaking up a Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) funded "booze party" as a starter. CO1 showed them they could be held to a very high standard of accountability. CO1 enacted tough discipline and demanded the whole crew to "stop, think, and do what it takes" to meet the standard. CO1 demonstrated the conduct he expected from each of them, and did not relent until all learned and met expectations. The crew of that ship has since excelled. "Division Officers went on to Department Head tours, and CO rides after that, the senior first class petty officers made chief, and the ship won the Battle E- even having run aground during the competitive year." CO1 attributed the results to "we were able to build the ship back up as team."

CO1 walked into the Commander command with "lots of experience." CO1 related:

I had been an XO three times: DDG XO, C2F Flag Sec, and XO TTGL. That said, as a Commander CO, I was micro-managed to death- very disappointing....Every aspect of my life was micromanaged.... my experienced was almost discounted....In the ten years since I had the PC, upper level leadership lost their confidence in their juniors. I also thought that from our level of leadership, we did not trust our commanders...My challenge was then: hold standards, meet goals, and deliver capability to the Navy.

**Challenges.** CO1 related his biggest challenges.

My ship completed 'a brutal INSURV.' The report read 'The ship was well prepared, clean, and its ability to self-assess was above average; but the ship is broken.' My ship was one of the ships in the Balisle Report. Among the deficiencies noted –'Ship only did 348 PQS quals.' We were built for 83 Enginemen, we had 41, and 10 of those were brand new and hadn't had time to qualify. The system was pummeling ships and COs for their performance and materiel condition resulting from personnel and training policy decisions made years before in efforts to reduce costs and streamline the Navy. Driven by money savings initiatives, fewer people, less technical training for Sailors enroute to their ships, and reduced maintenance raised the challenges of command.

CO1's ship was the first of its class to undergo the new Fleet Response Training Program (FRTP). The FRTP, implemented in 2003, was designed to make ships more available between major maintenance periods and rapidly certify ships as ready for deployment. CO1 reported:

We worked every day from September 2008 through May 2009, but holidays—even Sundays... Each Sailor was given a day off each week... We were always training... We had just barely enough bodies to maintain a three-section watchbill.... No relief on enginemen, no relief on tactical training. Above me—no one above me—wanted to say 'Delay the inspection or don't deploy.'... Two weeks before INSURV, we suffered major casualties, including loss of the stern gate, and the ship was not materially sound to execute its wartime mission. Instead of dumping money into fixing the ship, the TYCOM tried to get by on waivers. I knew that if you couldn't practice for INSURV, you wouldn't succeed.

Additionally, due to timing and maintenance problems, the ship completed the INSURV two weeks before deployment— during the Pre Overseas Movement (POM) period what by policy— had been a "sacrosanct" no visit or inspection period for leave and upkeep of the ship.

The Crew was put through a ringer... they would eventually deploy with only a 48 hour POM. We held the change of command in the well deck at 1100... and the ship got underway at 1300 for a day; and a week later, sailed off to serve in Fifth Fleet. It would be a rough deployment.

CO1 summed up the biggest challenge as “Getting support from the system.” Although CO1 said the “leadership above were good people,” CO1 could not say enough about their “failure to address the true level of readiness... casualties were being ignored.” Many pieces of equipment were given “Waivers” not to operate properly, and many “Departures from Specifications (DFS) had been filed against the gear that could not be fixed.” CO1’s experience in trying to get the ship prepared for the visit by the Board of Inspection and Survey(or “INSURV” as it is known in the Fleet) epitomized the challenge. Based on the ship’s materiel condition and recent casualties, CO1 had “told the boss, the ship was not able to practice for the underway demonstration portion of the inspection.” The boss told him the inspection couldn’t be moved, nor could the deployment date. Having been a Flag Sec and knowing who possibly could help; CO1 briefed the “SURFLANT staff 4 months before INSURV about the true materiel condition and lack of people to qualify on various watches. I felt like I had to ‘Cover my ass’... The official INSURV report noted the ship was well prepared—but broken.”

CO1 related:

On the Monday of the first week following INSURV, at a meeting with the Admiral (COMNAVSURFLANT) and his council of Captains, I was shocked when the Admiral asked, ‘Captain, what could you have done better?’ I answered him ‘Nothing’... I then showed him the brief that I had sent previously— nine months before—to all 16 of his assistant Chiefs of Staff asking for help to address the upcoming INSURV...Eventually, the Navy poured \$3 Million into ship to get it ready for deployment...Problem stemmed from lack of money for ship readiness dollars—which included manning- numbers and experience, maintenance, and training.

The ship deployed and performed passably for the next six months. However, upon return from Fifth Fleet in time for the holidays, both the CO and XO were sacked for inappropriate behavior. In December, COMNAVSURFLANT called and had CO1 go

back to relieve with the CO, XO, and another officer gone. “My job was to hold it together for 30 days.” CO1 was disappointed to learn that the efforts to instill a meritocracy had been undone in a few short months as the CO played favorites and abused his authority. CO1 noted a “degraded command climate—no trust—no qualifications...” He continued:

I was able to start to heal the wound inflicted by a CO who abused authority and an XO who had covered it up...The ship then responded, coming together with a new CO when sent as part of the disaster response effort off Haiti. By all accounts the ship, new CO, and crew excelled.

CO1 noted:

My high water mark in my career was the LT command tour; I felt appreciated, trusted, and valued. We may not be preparing enough folks to be COs—so that we have extra and a sense of competition...Readiness is what you are ready with, but also what are you ready for, and how do you know you’re you ready, and what can you really do? Our new measures may be too simplistic and easy to show ‘green.’

CO1 came back to tactics:

We may need to measure a CO’s tactical ability—CO of BAINBRIDGE said he wasn’t trained for the Seal-led pirate rescue mission... We need to adapt a mission profile; need to learn to talk that language—mission. The focus needs to be on mission/ expected employment. We have done Don’t Ask Don’t Tell (DADT) and Anti Sexual Assault and counter suicide... instead of maintaining the warfighting focus.

### **Parameters of Performance in Command**

**Practices.** CO1 related, “I based my command philosophy on mustering an abundance of personal involvement... we maintained a ‘Mission-focus’... and I was constantly seeking to know how we were doing, feeling, thinking...” As far as my confidence in command and how I deemed we were doing well:

Good food and clean ship make a big difference and yield a good environment... They saw I cared about their quality of life (QOL)... People will work all day long if they know you care! I spent a lot of time walking the ship and performed

many of the basic Sailor routines—such as serving in the galley. The Food Services Officer and Supply Officer ‘hated it’ when I served extra portions on Food Line. Observing how the crew talked to each other was another key listening point.

On the effect of training:

Training is vital to command success. Training intensity includes preparation, execution, and follow-up. Team building starts from the CPO mess and emphasizes DIVO development. I linked CPO/CMC and DIVO training, and tied ENS/JOs FITREPs with their CPOs. I would ask the Chief, ‘How are we doing with our Ensign?’ to begin the discussion in counseling the developing division officer. I had few discipline problems since we were clear about expecting every one’s performance to ‘meet or exceed standards.’ ...I used MAST as a hammer—so crew knew what to expect if they did not toe the line.

We were succeeding:

I knew I was succeeding in command when we met all commitments... In my first tour, I knew I was doing well by meeting with my crew and noticing my Coffee ready in morning—that subtle hint of respect... Moreover, as a LT in Command, I received positive feedback from my seniors.... And I was able to observe the commands I had and see what happened after I left; that ship earned the Battle E and succeeded on deployment in spite of messed up CO-XO team. I made it a point to bulk up the chiefs. The LSD team was able to take lessons we learned and have a 3rd CO in less than nine months, and go excel off Haiti.

**Accomplishments/ Disappointments.** All three CO tours demonstrated the importance of early command- temper mettle with early responsibilities. We cleaned the ship and fixed all we could as the time, schedule, and budget allowed. I was proud of the record of follow-on assignments of those I led. Many stayed in and were selected for command or as enlisted advanced to CPO. We met operational commitments and I had a band at COC.... Then, I was brought back to Command when the ship returned from deployment to hold the fort until the next CO could arrive. Then the ship left and excelled in support of the Haiti relief mission.

CO1 summed up:

I was disappointed in that ten years after my exhilarating LT command tours, the mood on the waterfront had dropped, and some COs in major command were absolutely miserable—due to micro-managing. It was hard to get the staff to respond—they could only listen and shrug—no one seemed willing to take up the fight.

“I do think that it takes a different skill set for DC than at sea.”

### **Sample Artifacts and Handouts**

CO1 noted “I based my command philosophy on mustering an abundance of personal involvement... we maintained a ‘Mission-focus’ ... and I was constantly seeking to know how we were doing, feeling, thinking.”

### **Advice for Those Who Would Follow the Path to Command**

CO1 offered this sage advice for those who dare to follow:

To Department Heads CO1 said:

Think about the position as part of a life of service. Decide if you’re in it for fun or a life of service? In Command of a naval ship- more than any other military milestone- except a combat mission on ground- you are alone. The experience is unique, and better not be about money, there is no magic dust to get you out of situations you had no input in making, but you have to get out of them- without losing anything, anybody, or wasting resources. You must decide if service is best expressed in command.... Some are not cut out for it. It is OK to say you want it- and then pursue it- when in command relish it-, do it. Command is never long enough. Your early leadership experiences will help; my extended XO tour really sealed the deal, so I was well prepared as a leader.

Being CO is not ‘all about me’ ....successful commanders are proud they had the opportunity, some may have bitter after thoughts and tastes—they had problems, many not of their own making... but the experience is worth the journey.... Proud to have served.

To the XO/CO Fleet ups:

Remember that you are the XO not the PCO; watch the CO’s disengaged side—take care of crew, don’t worry about being the CO—avoid ‘the CO wants....’ I was an XO three times: CG XO, C2F Flag Sec, and XO SWDG. So there may be

times, as uncomfortable as it may be, when you have to tell Boss when he's on a wrong path; but make sure you both present a united front when emerging from a discussion. As XO, your paramount loyalty is to the CO—undying, unquestioning—even making him face up to his own bad decision or missteps. Loyalty includes telling the truth.

To the future COs:

Assignment as a ship's CO is a privilege- good and faithful servant- not something special. And it's not about you- Admiral Hank Giffin noted that you didn't get better looking with command pin, and you don't get richer. Continue to hone your ability to be a tactician and manager and a leader- understand those positions. Know that there will be really good days and really bad days. Stand ready to do the President's violence. Get over your EGO- but realize there are some perks that Sailors enjoy lavishing you with- don't let it go to your head. Post command commanders have a different mindset- even broader perspective.

### **Drawings of Relative Challenges, Experience, and Performance**

CO1 provided three graphs comparing his experience with his first CO. CO1 noted the level of challenges were commensurate, just focused on different things. When CO1 mapped the ship's attitude over his tour and the ship's schedule, he drew a sharp drop post INSURV as the ship neared deployment. He noted that his PC tours showed rises throughout, especially the second ship that went from near bottom to the top. He graphed his performance as CO even through the PC tours, and steadily upward during his LSD command.

### **Summary of Analyses**

In reviewing CO1's responses, several themes emerged to augment the preselected categories. These include personal commitment and desire for command, the development of a Command Philosophy, the importance of developing self-efficacy through training and lived experiences; the awareness to handle unexpected surprises

since we cannot teach it all; and a collection of observations, causes, and potential solutions.

CO1 related his personal commitment and desire for command grew from his observation of “the quality of folks going to Command” that had “impressed me greatly.” He was presented opportunities and early responsibility that “struck the flame of the possibility that I could command at sea.” So, CO1 aimed for selection to early command during his first department head tour. An early commitment to Command at sea may be a key theme.

The role of models—both good and bad—helps one fashion a “Command Philosophy,” which described a personal sense of the meaning and practice for Command. CO1 demonstrated his developing self-efficacy through lived experiences and training. CO1 represented those who have succeeded beyond what their initial concept of a life of service been. The climb from E-1 to O-6 represents a life of service as espoused by CO1. He laid out three themes that reverberated throughout the following interviews:

CO1 demonstrated the *Execution* behavior “*Set clear goals and priorities*” (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 57). CO1 exemplified the naval officer’s quality of *Firmness* (Bogle & Holwitt, 2004, p. 18). CO1 demonstrated the “I” component (emotional Intelligence) of the RICH model. When asked what he could have done better in preparing for the INSURV, CO1 firmly stated “Nothing.” He had taken all necessary measures to prepare for the inspection, inform his bosses that he needed help, and when the system could not support him, pressed on to present his ship and crew for the material

inspection. His thorough documentation allowed the shore repair facilities to come in and fix the ship to undertake its scheduled deployment.

CO1 led a life of service to the Navy and the nation. He had the ability to counsel from the E-1 to the O-10 level. He never forgot his roots always ensuring he worked to find what was best for the sailors. And yet, he kept counsel with three and four-star admirals directly. CO1's age, experience, and judgment earned him the title of "Old Sage."

## **CO2. The Philosopher/ Teacher**

CO2, a nuclear-trained SWO, commanded a DDG from February 2000 to June 2001 during the time when USS *Cole* was attacked, and later commanded a CG from May 2007 through November 2008.

### **Personal Background/ Motivation**

CO2 stated the desire for command derived from a “combination of influences from the Captain of his second ship and the influence of the Naval Academy education and experience.” CO2 described that ship:

As a special ship under special captain...that CO enjoyed what he was doing and made us feel like we wanted to be that guy...Many of the officers of the wardroom stay close... and significant numbers of the officers with whom I served stayed in for command, and several have been promoted to Admiral – including one who transferred to the Medical Corps. ...Amazing the influence of one Captain on a generation of officers. The Naval Academy’s influence includes the history of naval ships and the stories of famous battles, which center on the captain.... A ship does take on the personality of the CO–‘Conrad was right.’ Command is something you want–or really don’t want.

### **Path to Command / Preparation/ JO Experiences/ Key People / Events**

CO2’s preparation and paths to command were “standard” for a U.S. Navy nuclear power trained Surface Warfare Officer:

There were no ‘Barriers’– but the opposite–the system led us to command... never planned to stay in- never planned to get out–if we would stay on command track–(we called it the ‘track to CNO’): Division Officer, shore tour, Department Head, Executive Officer–toward CO assignment–until making a deliberate choice to do something else... not everybody would make it... I didn’t do a lot of personal ‘career engineering’–I just followed the light.

CO2 related:

I was well prepared to face the challenges of command, but comfortable- when assuming command? No. The Navy did a good job in school- always a school to prepare you for the next step: ‘Baby’ SWOS, DIVO, Department Head Course, Department Head, Prospective XO, XO, Prospective CO, CO.

CO2 continued:

I found it not a large risk but it involved a constant learning process... I was not perfectly prepared as an expert before facing arising challenges, but prepared to handle—with all sorts of help—any challenge that came my way. I was never comfortable in the beginning—always comfortable in end.... Unlike a COMM AIR pilot who trains on high fidelity simulators—in a new job—with the help of great chiefs, peers, and superiors—I figured it out. Chiefs very important in officer development.

CO2 related:

A key division officer/ Chief Petty Officer (DIVO/ CPO) relationship developed on my first ship that was exactly what I needed as Ensign. The Chief supported me in front of the troops, and felt empowered to correct me in private when needed...I have a feeling it is very different today.... I am convinced I would have had a very different career without that influence. We should not discount those kinds of influences.

### **Command Experience(s)/ Challenges**

CO2 commanded a DDG between February 2000 and June 2001, and later commanded a CG from May 2007 to November 2008.

I was well prepared since I had served as acting CO when CO was hospitalized for first part of my XO tour...and I realized that Command was a blank piece of paper and my command style would develop by what would occur and how I responded to the unfolding events in command.

CO2 informed:

My DDG tour was OK—focused on standards and execution....We were a day out of Aden when *Cole* got hit.... Circumstances changed rapidly... My ship provided support for six weeks until relieved.... We took on a Public Affairs focus and used a heavy command involvement to show every surviving *Cole* sailor (who was willing) by taking and sending pictures back. It's one thing to hear that your son/ daughter/ spouse is OK; another, to see that they are.

**Challenges.** CO2 disclosed:

Getting support from the 'system' was difficult. Maintaining morale when working hours for the weekly battle of the routine was one of the hardest things I had to do. We focused on the family instead. The command style you adopt for

this is unexpected because the command environment changes your priorities—sometimes daily.

My time in command on DDG spanned between Basic and COMPTUEX through return from deployment. Following *Cole*, we came home to a changed NAVY—but it did not require a fundamental approach to my leadership.

We reallocated ship's time and personal time and shifted to focus on family issues. I wondered 'Are we ready to make that commitment?' I focused on taking care of family lines. We are much more closely connected in this current 'e-news' environment.

CO2 added:

"It was similar on the cruiser; I relieved midway through the Basic phase and took the cruiser through whole deployment."

### **Parameters of Performance in Command**

**Practices.** CO2 described how he commanded:

It took me lots of personal Involvement in every seamanship evolution. Being the CO as teacher, I trained hard- especially in Seamanship and Navigation. We practiced, we talked through every evolution before we entered or left port, and we maintained a Mission-focus.

CO2's descriptions reminded the researcher of the parallel between an actor on the stage and leadership (Bennis, 2009; Bell & Zemke, 1990; Mangham, 1990):

It's not exactly constant "Improv" but it's closer to that concept than executing a formal ceremony such as a reenlistment. For those types of practices, Navy ships have detailed scripts to follow; others, such as transiting into and out of port, we have general guidelines and remain on our side of the channel and stay away from the shallows.

CO2 described how he knew things were going well:

As far as parameters to know things were going well, it seems the book *Blink* (Gladwell, 2005) which describes a 'gut feel' or expertise that there is just a 'vibe' that a ship has—it may not be analyzable or definable—but it's not attainable from the CO's Cabin .... Cleanliness and preservation are necessary, a dirty-rusty ship is never really ready; but the cleanliness and preservation piece is necessary but not sufficient....It takes the self-discipline/ self-policing to maintain standards

in berthing and conduct. Avoiding alcoholic related incidents, such as DUIs, is one indicator reflective of pride in unit. For example, during a port visit, one of my first tour Ensigns, not known as the stellar performer, took command of the Chiefs to settle down one of their own. That Ensign who proved willing to take on a crusty CPO was an important indicator.

(NOTE: CO2 showed the Touchdown symbol.)

CO2 continued: “When the whole ship knows what it takes to win and does it.

We had 18 port visits and no liberty incidents. That’s what thrills you about command.”

CO2 added:

Additional indicators of growing pride and the most obvious. We never missed an obligation, always sailed on time, executed maneuvers with precision; we did what it took to complete the firing train... I take those as givens, if a ship’s not doing those, look at the challenges and all that you have to fix....Know that things that are supposed to work are working—understand how you got it— now keep it.

CO 2 relied on faith:

As far as my confidence in command, I must address the importance of spiritual involvement. I was constantly on my knees asking for guidance... Prayer—my faith—kept me buoyed and confident in future successes... I believe it yielded ‘Confidence without arrogance.’

CO2 described:

As for practices in Command before *Cole* and after, the major changes were the commitments to AT/FP and the ramp up to advanced VBSS. Those evolutions draw significant numbers of resources—i.e. Sailor time. Most ships sail with 18–24 VBSS members. And it takes 19 man-weeks to make just one fully qualified team member. As a result, combined with the drop in emphasis on Mahanian style of warfighting, all warfare areas such as ASW, ASUW, and power projection from the sea have declined.... Sea control and sea denial capability still seem OK in the western Pacific. They do ASW— and value it—and BMD missions. But, they may be losing ground in Tomahawk proficiency.

CO2 judged:

The ‘Tyranny of the current tasking’ is leading to our core competencies stagnating. The recent Bold Alligator exercise was one step in regaining our confidence in moving Marines from ships to shore. We have no young and coming generation of Amphibious experience now.... In March, we just landed Marines from Navy ships to take shore objectives... we have most of the younger

generation—including USMC—who had never done it- ... the Navy has been doing AT/FP and VBSS at expense of other core missions.

As to other concerns:

My cruiser was undermanned for what we were expected to do. The current Navy concepts of reduced manning, lack of shore based maintenance, and emphasis on time off have made it difficult, no *Impossible*, to preserve and maintain and train for what we needed to be able to do.

The demise of SIMAs:

Elimination of SIMAs dropped experience gained of Sailors returning to sea from Shore Duty. Instead of learning more advanced repair and maintenance techniques by repairing gear on ships they would be later be assigned to, Sailors were doing non-associated tours in base security, in Iraq with the Army, or as masters-at arms.

The elimination of SIMA to a Regional Maintenance Center concept dropped ability to create ‘journeymen’ in the Hull, mechanical, and electrical areas. We no longer benefited from the return investment from Sailors working at shore-based IMAs. Sailors returned from shore duty no more proficient in their rates.

Sailors and officers are not growing up as ‘gear heads’ .... We really need the old pub *Tools and their Uses*.... Some folks needed a book to tell them what an open end wrench was and how to apply tightening torque properly.

### **Accomplishments/ Disappointments.**

“I was focused on qualifying and preparing as many folks as I could for success.

I often wrote letters to the Sailor’s spouse or parents to inform them of their Sailor’s arrival, progress, and success.”

One commitment was to “developing depth in shiphandlers through my personal involvement in Seamanship and Navigation as the senior mariner:”

Before every sea detail, we held Navigation Briefs—or rehearsals—for about a dozen personnel. The watch team and key observers would draw the expected track from memory, including appropriate NAV aids, locations, key bearings, and a sketch of the land and shoal water. I wanted all to be able to understand what we knew and what we expected to see. The publication *Sailing Directions* gave some hints. So we were prepared, and knew the difference between good water

and bad water... We never used 'chartlets.' All water looks deep; we had studied the charts beforehand so we knew where we could find good water. This preparation gave us a lot of depth.

He continued:

An example of how the team helped avoid disaster ....So much so that when one important person with the CONN made a mistake by calling for left full rudder about a mile too soon, several different people spoke up, ordered rudder amidships, and placed the ship back on the safe track. During our post evolution debrief and review, all watchstanders contributed different—but supporting—reasons for jumping in to avert disaster. This 'Depth' was built on preparation and practice, and gave us great confidence.

CO2 reiterated: "Why it is so important for all to be involved in Navigation? To keep the ship in good water—so the CO/XO can stay in fight."

### **Sample Artifacts and Handouts**

CO2 shared many artifacts. Although he had no written command philosophy, CO2 delivered it "verbally, often" and in opening discussions as he took over command to the crew. "They were split into four groups—Officers, Chiefs, E5-E6, and juniors and heard me say three main points: mission, readiness, and family."

CO2 met with every newly reported Sailor at 0800 in his cabin on the next work day and discussed his philosophy with them. "Each new Sailor heard three main points: mission, readiness, and family:"

I told them again and again: 'live it.' I also sent a lot of letters to home—wonderful collections—mailed as personal letters on CO's 'coachwhip' stationary. The letter included how to reach me (mailing address) as CO and promised I would take good care of their Sailor. This was information important to keep Moms, spouses, etc. on our side. I always sent the letter to the spouse, and with permission, to parents (Some desire to cut the ties and I respected that.).... We recruit the Sailor but retain the family. Never underestimate the retention power of parental pride in their son or daughter serving in the Navy.

As to the impact of manning and funding policies:

It was a huge impact, the cruiser was undermanned; we dropped from around 400 to less than 300. We did a study that showed we needed 60 more people to do what we ought to have been able to do, which was exactly how many empty racks we had. Combined with the reduced outside resources and a culture that emphasized time off, this trend was putting ships in a difficult position. It was challenging/ 'no impossible,' to maintain the ship and conduct the training and education necessary for preparing for naval warfighting and ensuring a Sailor's promotion and advancement....Gone are days devoted to weeks of ASW training to hone our warfighting skills. With insufficient study/ practice time available on the ship, matched with decisions to reduce Sailors' schooling, our profession ability and experience dropped off through the decade since 2000.

### **Advice for Those Who Would Follow the Path to Command**

CO2 offered this learned advice for those who dream to follow:

To Department Heads he listed:

When you get to command, enjoy it and make sure your folks see it. As a Department Head, help your CO be able to enjoy it. Make sure you aid that effort. Generally, Department Heads are not having a great time because their efforts are on the line. Not slacking, doing the job gets job satisfaction. As CO, it will be an amazing opportunity to see a successful Department Head team.

To future XOs, he cautioned:

As a fleetup XO, is the XO, not the PCO.

People, people, people.

XO must focus on People. Every people program supports excellence—Biggest thing XO can do. XO is in position that is most able to affect pay, family,

XO Messing and Berthing

Galley and food services,

Laundry, ship's store, mail, and heart of sailor care—

Training: Lead the Ship's Training Efforts across all elements—DC, 3—M, Advancement, Warfighting.

Be the second in command—but—Not in Command—but instantly ready-

To future COs, he added:

When in command, command- decide—lead.

In most cases, begin by building consensus, a team, get everyone involved when able.

But, sometimes, you don't have time to talk through everything and why— then decide/ command— follow me.  
If you never do this, you are probably screwing up—or if you're always doing it.

Recognize when you are the only one who sees right answer—command.

### **Drawings of Relative Challenges, Experience, and Performance**

CO2 thought the level of challenge was constant, although the picture showed a gradual rise. He noted “same level of challenges, just different.” His ship performance graphs show a rise with his DDG undergoing a prompt jump after *Cole* and 9/11. From those incidents, he graphed a steady improving performance level. As he was drawing the graphs, CO2 mentioned that he thought that the researcher should be talking junior officers to cross check a group of DIVOs enroute to become Department Heads. “You're asking us to self-report on our performance. You will probably find some things from those DIVOs opposite to what COs think.”

### **Summary of Analyses**

In reviewing CO2's responses, several themes emerged to augment the preselected categories. Many of these mirrored CO1's: personal commitment and desire for command, the development of a Command Philosophy, the importance of developing self-efficacy through training and lived experiences; the awareness to handle unexpected surprises since we cannot teach it all; and a collection of observations, causes and potential solutions. CO2 related his personal commitment and desire for command stemmed from a “combination of influences from the Captain of my second ship and the influence of the Naval Academy education and experience.” CO2's contribution to new themes was the recognition of the importance of COs on the next generations of officers.

CO2 represented those officers who acknowledged the importance of the Division Officer-Chief relationship in his development to become a CO. CO2 confessed he was “prepared, but not comfortable...and grew into confidence/ competence as I gained experience.” He also enjoyed the opportunity to exercise command development during a strong XO tour. CO2 was concerned that he has lived through degradations in warfighting readiness. “We focused on AT/FP and VBSS at expense of other core missions.” CO2 demonstrated the *Execution* behavior “*Expand your people’s capabilities*” (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 57). CO2 exemplified the naval officer’s quality of noting every “meritorious act of a subordinate” (Bogle & Holwitt, 2004, p. 18). CO2 met with every newly reported Sailor at 0800 in his cabin on the next work day, and discussed his philosophy with them. “Each new Sailor heard three main points: mission, readiness, and family.” CO2 illustrated the leadership model of Stewardship. CO2 demonstrated the “R” component (Realistic optimism) of the RICH model.

Continued analysis across CO2’s responses generated ideas for key themes to explore:

- The SWO path
- The Importance of family
- *Blink* and PRD
- Faith
- Teamwork and forceful backup

CO2’s title of “The philosopher/teacher” was derived from his emphasis on knowing the details and rehearsing for special evolutions. CO2 demonstrated the decisiveness a commander must possess. “When in command, command–decide, lead.”

### **CO3. The Legacy**

CO3 commanded an FFG November 2007 to June 2009 and assumed command as interim CO on a DDG May to June 2010 following the unplanned relief of its CO.

#### **Personal Background/ Motivation**

CO3 had been a Navy junior; Dad was a Navy (SWO) who commanded a destroyer, a frigate, and a Destroyer Squadron (DESRON). He noted:

At a young age, I was impressed by the people—although I admit that ‘sticky buns,’ the heavy dough delicacies offered by the ship’s bakers throughout the Navy— were probably the first attraction to the sea. I loved being on the ocean... the Navy was full of colorful people... and I recalled stories of challenges and success. Following my father’s retirement, the family homesteaded in Annapolis. My immediate ambition was to attend USNA to fly, but I could not qualify for flight training as a pilot due to eyesight limitations, and I had negative experiences about being just in the back of an aircraft and not in control.

CO3 admitted becoming “comfortable with being on, rather than above, the sea.”

#### **Path to Command / Preparation/ JO Experiences/ Key People / Events**

CO3’s path to command followed the standard SWO career pipeline: two DIVO tours, first on an FF as ASWO and CICO and, then to DCA on a CG; followed by schooling at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) in Monterey. Department Head school preceded the assignment that CO3 deemed was “going to be hard—and a big transition.” He recalled:

The first department head job was tough, as the Operations Officer for a CO who had been one, but my second CO (really good) on that ship allowed me to begin to think about staying.... There was the closeness of wardroom I recalled from my younger days. My second Department Head tour cemented drive for command... but it wasn’t easily fulfilled.

He continued:

In the second department head job as the Chief Engineer (CHENG); when I didn't screen for XO, I wanted to go back to sea so I took a billet on the staff of Commander Second Fleet. From there I served as XO on a DDG and completed a Joint assignment, before being assigned to Command. I felt that it was a fair and competitive process... More time at sea is a plus.

### **Command Experience(s)/ Challenges**

CO3 commanded a frigate between 2008 and 2010 and assumed command as interim CO on a DDG May to June 2010 following the unplanned relief of the CO following an incident when the ship hit a buoy.

**Challenges.** CO3 noted:

I faced no real barriers.... My struggle to screen seemed to result from the pyramid effect of fair competition- I recognized, eventually, we all are not going to screen at some level. I had never been on a FFG until in command, but discovered it is all about the crew, especially getting through Basic during first few months I was in command. We slogged through that 4 months-very challenging.

CO3 surmised:

My timing was lucky, and I took command right after maintenance, a week before starting sea trails at the beginning of the Basic Phase and found accelerated expectations in the FRTP. The ship had been on four deployments over the last five years with a '12-14-12-13' months turn around. In the middle of our deployment, we unfortunately found out that we were going to go again with only a six-month turnaround. Not the way you'd want to find out. We discovered that tidbit of bad news when the information was buried in the Partnership of the Americas (PoA) deployment message that assigned ships and Helo Dets. Our current deployed status and Helo det information was on there, but the message also assigned us a Det for the next deployment. I had no idea that was happening... there was no top-level cover or warning... and there was no way to prevent release of that schedule from causing a negative effect on crew morale, and the word screaming back to the families.

CO3 summed up the joy of being at sea:

Luckily, we were busy at sea. Our current operational schedule included many South American port visits, and lots of exercises where we got to shoot weapons and work with diesel powered submarines. The crew was happy to be operating

and to visit new places. And, we weren't too heavily tasked during the six months we were home.

CO3 noted:

It was harder than it should have been to get support from the 'system'.... I wasn't able to CASREP gear when it was really out of service- so therefore the gear didn't move up to a priority for maintenance from off ship repair facilities.... And we didn't have enough experienced people to conduct those repairs ourselves.

CO3 reviewed:

Looking at Commodores and some major command Captains in the Strike Group jobs, we may not have the balance right between time at sea vs. time in DC. It may be time for an at sea operational specialty.

### **Practices.**

CO 3 expressed his surprise at the scope of the job of Command:

I found myself doing a lot more than I recall my COs did. I had to be personally involved in everything from operations to qualifications to administrative matters. Although we maintained a 'Mission-focus,' I was glad that we spent more time at sea.

He noted the importance of SWOS:

The SWOS schools along the way were pretty good. Both PXO and PCO helped but I gained more value from the bonding with fellow COs and the post-command mentoring. We each were matched with a CO going to major command.

He described how he monitored progress:

To assure myself that things were going good, I was always moving around. We executed the Division in the spotlight program to buck up the crew and recognize good performance. I had a good handle on the demeanor of crew. I knew when we were under stress or when things were going well based on body language and the way routine reports were being handled.... I did find the new officers to be very thin skinned—that may be a generational thing.

## **Accomplishments/ Disappointments.**

He expanded on the surprises:

My command experience surprised me with the amount of detail and time I had to spend on mundane matters—programs, ‘administrivia,’ cutting through red tape—to get things/ maintenance done.... Although it seemed right at the time, the cut back on shore capabilities and reducing manning to save money, coupled to a greater reliance on outside activities, added to a CO losing control/ and having to deal with a lack of expertise on the deck plates.

He thought his Department Heads still had much to learn. He spoke appallingly about the quality of officers commissioned through the “Seaman to Admiral” program who served as his Department Heads:

All of my Department Heads were commissioned through the ‘Seaman to Admiral’ program. They would have been great SCPOs/ MCPOs- but were not as good as Department Heads. I had trouble getting the staff to listen. My officers made too many basic mistakes in the paperwork, admin, and messages required to run the Navy: ‘Evals, FITREPs, Basic instructions, Standing orders, etc.’ I wondered if was due to ‘Generational’ preps. I asked myself, ‘How did I learn that all the preps were necessary?’ I had a reluctance to scream or even ask hard questions because they would shut down on any show of ‘sternness’ - and I’m not a stern guy.

CO3 reflected on changes:

Navy policies since 9/11, such as VBSS and Force Protection and fiscal policies, have had tremendous effect on the challenges of command. Managing AT/FP and VBSS—must have right guy in charge.

He continued:

The ‘optimal’ Manning project had a huge impact very quickly in Navy as it reduced crew sizes and experience. As the DDG XO, I had to manage racks and people because we didn’t have enough bunks. I went from a Department Head on a CG with 400, to a DDG w/ 320- now they are steaming around at 220. 100 less people as XO for a similarly sized and capable ship. The FFGs had room for 220; lowered to 196 and further to 155. We could not do flight ops simultaneous with any other evolution. I only could man a single ASW team. We had no time for executing Planned Maintenance. Plus, there was no time to reward the crew with a 96 hour liberty for exceptional performance. We needed the whole crew for every evolution.

He learned quickly:

Early in command, I realized I had to assign folks judiciously. Although some guys had been earmarked for one position, I waited until the officers reported and I had a chance to size them up before deciding on their assignments. I chose a nerdy guy who was slated as my Damage Control Assistant (DCA), responsible for the whole ship's firefighting and machinery restoration, to be the Communication Officer (COMMO), and assigned a more confident, direct personality to assume the tough guy role as DCA.

CO3 was one who noted the problem of managing officers:

Even though enlisted manning was falling, we had to deal with a bow wave of officers when Baby SWOS was curtailed. It was difficult trying to match every Ensign to a meaningful DIVO assignment with a CPO and appropriate equipment. Preparing for the INSURV with fewer people with less seniority meant more time to supervise directly. Getting us to take care of ship and conduct basic cleaning and preservation required full workdays, every day of the week. I remember when weekend work was defacto 'punishment.' Instead of using weekend to fix screw-ups, we needed to work every day to do the job. From my perspective on the staff, nearly every ship has to work some weekends every month just to be ready for the next hurdle on the schedule.

CO3 had another opportunity to excel:

After my command tour, I was assigned to a Strike Group Surface Ops position. When one of our ships hit a buoy entering Bahrain on its first port visit in Fifth Fleet., I did the investigation. They had some leadership and procedural compliance issues. About a month later, my Admiral took me along with him to relieve the CO, and put me into Command of that DDG. It was tough going at first because the CO had been very likable.... I was able to begin its journey back to full confidence and performance and commanded for about two months.

### **Sample Artifacts and Handouts**

CO3's Command philosophy focused on four key issues "Safety, Training, Fun, and Family" which he reiterated often. A new Sailor reported to him within 48 hours for a welcome talk where the Sailor experienced the exhortation of his CO, "Safety, Training, Fun, and Family." As he conducted selected Captain's Calls around the ship, he concluded with "Safety, Training, Fun, and Family."

## **Advice for Those Who Would Follow the Path to Command**

CO3 passed these tidbits as a legacy:

To Department Heads:

As CO, you will still be involved in management and administration, so in your work—make sure it's right. As CO, show them the right way and try to have some fun. Remember one day of good makes up for months of hard work—focus on Qualifications, your Sailors and your own. It is professionally rewarding to see your new officers qualify. Get some more ship driving experience—learn it, do it as often as possible as a Department Head. Work on molding your piece of the crew; set the pace and the tone, lead from the front. Do it your way- discover what works and what doesn't. Your Department Head ride determines your future possibilities.

To the XOs:

Get the CO to treat you as his relief. CO is a human being and needs involvement of XO in command decisions. Share and vent- speak frankly- build trust between you and CO, and you both and the crew. As an XO fleetup, be the XO, only one CO, you are not the PCO. Do XO things: messing and berthing should be at top. Hopefully, you'll be empowered. 'XO this is your baby'—let the Department Heads have some autonomy, but lead from the front.

To the COs:

As CO, realize you're going to be involved in the nitty gritty more than you thought. Deal with the hand you're dealt, you will find some aces, a couple of jacks, and some deuces, these, and fours—be quick to move folks as necessary.

CO3 assessed:

My hardest thing was to stay in my chair and let the XO run it/ practice—let folks do their jobs—and expect them to. Some things will go smoothly—sometimes you must insert yourself. You gotta do it. Mission must be done—Duty. I am not sure that we can prevent things when CO is not involved.

CO3 went into details:

Some things you will get down in weeds and Department Heads may not be capable either... can't fire them all... show them the right way. Bottom line is mission accomplishment. It is OK to go help them/ teach them the right way.

CO3 charged:

As to recent CO failures in command, a famous CO's reputation was generally known about her flaming personality; many of her superiors had chances to counsel/ correct—but no one did until the flame out. Additionally, I do not buy the idea that alcohol caused you to do this. Even drunk you have a good idea of what is right, and because you were drunk is no excuse for outrageous behavior.

### **Drawings of Relative Challenges, Experience, and Performance**

CO3 thought his first CO's challenges were more focused and contained within a manageable box. His challenges were more spread out and much larger. They included decreased manning and funding, leadership above the CO Micromanaging and over managing, and less slack in the schedule to accommodate unplanned maintenance.

His ship's schedule was not at all like the "nominal" schedule since his ship deployed twice within 18 months. He graphed the ship's performance during the first deployment as steady and then a rise to cover the second deployment. He felt he left the ship better than he found it.

### **Summary of Analyses**

In reviewing CO3's responses, several themes emerged to augment the preselected categories. MBWA, dealing with Manning and the lack of Shore Support, and restoring trust and accountability while warning against proceeding down the current path of trying to control everything. CO3 had accumulated "Lots of sea time." He was concerned about the seeming necessity to balance between DC tours and Sea tours. He highlighted the closeness of wardroom. He was also disappointed that the OPTEMPO and support required the need for weekend work.

CO3 related his first:

I had never been on a FFG until in command- but discovered it is all about the crew, especially getting through Basic during first few months I was in command. We slogged through that 4 months—very challenging.

CO3 demonstrated the *Execution behavior*” *Follow through*” (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 57). CO3 exemplified the naval officer’s quality of “*display conscientious courtesy*” (Bogle & Holwitt, 2004, p. 18). Analysis of CO3 discussion also highlighted a theme that has begun to appear in professional journals. What is it with seniors? Why do they feel the need to micromanage? At the same time, COs were being discouraged from submitting a casualty report (CASREP) until a ship could not meet minimum equipment. Additionally, CO3 was not about to let those COs who failed due to personal actions off the hook. He charged that those officers’ seniors knew and failed to take action to alter their course away from embarrassing failures.

CO3 represented those naval officers who have followed in their parents’ footsteps. In this sample, almost half had parents who served in the military, and four had commanded Navy ships. CO3 became the Legacy.

## **CO4. The Survivor**

CO4 commanded a DDG November 2001 to August 2003 during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and a CG May 2010 to November 2011. He received the U. S. Navy League John Paul Jones Award for Inspirational Leadership. This award is given to only one naval officer each year.

### **Personal Background/ Motivation**

CO4 stated:

I had very early influences about the Navy; I've only been out for only four years since my Dad was in the Navy before I went to college. I went to the Navy Academy and became a Nuke SWO. I loved the Oceans, the ships, the sailors, but an experience on my shore duty turned me to a career and command. My Dad told me that 'idiots in the private sector were more prevalent than in the Navy.' Plus, the people I worked with in the Nuclear Navy were more motivated, patriotic, and competent. So I decided since I'm staying in, I may as well do the best I can to gain command selection and assignment.

### **Path to Command / Preparation/ JO Experiences/ Key People / Events**

CO4 recalled:

My path to command as a Nuke started and stayed at sea. I had not been married before my Department Head jobs, and it became more difficult to balance family and professional achievement after shore duty and the two follow-on Department Head tours. My spouse was very supportive- 'You really want to do this', and we stayed around Norfolk most of time. I had outstanding peers and leaders. Moreover, I was lucky to have had key XOs, and was XO of *Cole* up to six months before they were attacked.

He noted the special nature of the nuclear-trained officers' preparation:

The Nuke SWO path set us up for success. I had qualified three times before I had set foot on my first ship. I was older and more mature than most of my peers- and the rigor of nuke training transferred to other areas. It was a Fitrep from a CVN CO-Aviator nuke- that helped me screen on the third look for command both times.

And he noted he was afforded the same opportunities as others:

The Navy worked to equip me for success in command. The SWO schools were awesome. And, the two week leadership course helped prepare me for many of the challenges of command.

### **Command Experience(s)/ Challenges**

CO4 commanded a DDG November 2001 to August 2003 and participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and later, a CG May 2010 to November 2011, surviving an INSURV and excelling in Counter-piracy operations during a 20-month assignment.

#### **Challenges.** He noted

Both ships had deployments; one had INSURV. Between my O-5 and O-6 command experiences, the challenges increased due to manning, funding, and the ‘tentacles’ of upper echelon. I felt less secure as the CO of the cruiser than I was as CO of the DDG. As an O5, my ship hit a buoy, and I tipped my RHIB over. I survived- but now O5's lose their jobs on happenings such as those. I can't pin the blame on who/ what/ caused this zero defect mindset or lack of tolerance for any mistakes. Many COs find themselves asking ‘what is the least effort I can get by with?’ Often we are asked, ‘Can you live without fixing that pump?’

“On the DDG, we were hit with a surprise re-set of our certifications after our wartime deployment- and failed the OPPE and CMTQ. We were allowed to recover.”

#### **Practices.** He described:

In the Post 9/11, figuring out how to track/ qualify/ balance force protection- and get out of fear of making a mistake. Personal involvement was a daily chore. I made it a point to check out what was going on on the other guys. Did they have the same challenges as me? Have they solved any/ do they have better processes? I felt like my job in command was to shield the three hundred folks inside the lifelines from those who would make their lives miserable. We maintained a clear focus on mission.

He discussed how he “assessed” the ship:

Funny that you should ask about ‘assessment’- I had a visiting Admiral who asked ‘How do you know how well you're doing?’ Well, I don't get yelled at and I haven't been fired. I had many examples from past COs who stopped to tell folks good job! An absence of disdain may be a positive indicator on how you're doing with the staff. Although we placed a lot of emphasis on Department E's and the Battle E and won them on both ships, I discovered they were not a big impact at the TYCOM. Sometimes folks waste resources just trying to re-perform

a *Satisfactory* evolution to turn it into an *Outstanding* grade. If you'd just get ready for the first time and excel on that one, it'll be cheaper. In wartime, you may not get a second chance!

He discussed career programs:

Our 'Retention' awards maybe misnamed since most personnel programs are now designed to force good Sailors out- rather than keeping them in. Moreover, some folks I know were reenlisting just to get off the ship, or away from that Captain.

He related how he tracked programs:

COs had to pay attention to programs- A self-sustaining program went to pits in about 6 months. I used a variation of Division in the Spotlight (DITS) and called it 'PITS' - Program in the Spotlight. It used a one-page form- that asked two questions:

1. What is the program supposed to do?
2. Is it doing what it's supposed to do?

I also used the Command Climate survey- a group of O-6 reservists would survey the crew and report on 'how folks feel.' In my walking around the ship, I developed a scheme to get at the Sailor's concerns. I found that if you ask 'What are you doing' They'll say 'Nothing.' If you ask, 'How are you doing' they'll say 'Great.' But, if you ask 'What's bothering you' they will 'Vomit their life story'. You can't get at a sailor unless you ask those three questions. My philosophy was 'We care, my priorities were Mission, People, and Equipment.

CO4's Bottom line: "Sailors have to know that you'll back them up."

### **Accomplishments/ Disappointments**

CO4 proclaimed, "Both ships won the Battle E and the Ship's Safety award."

He discussed knowing the crew:

I found I knew crew best as XO- because I was doing the XO's Daily Messing and Berthing Inspections, leading the training teams, and seeing most of the crew in action. As CO I was more involved in Bridge and Combat. I recalled that a former SURFLANT Admiral noted that they key people to work on were your Department Heads- they are influenceable and make great strides under good leadership. I talked to crew as people- (as one sailor ten years later recalled).

As he compared his tours, he noted:

“My O-6 tour was more challenging both tactically and technically. I had to do more, was more stressed and making more decisions as a Captain in command.”

I had made some mistakes as a CDR CO:

I found my biggest enemies- revolved around me trying to do it all myself- all at once- overload with compounding fatigue. On the DDG, we tipped over the RHIB when trying to open from another ship alongside which I attributed to my fatigue and trying to do it all. On the CG, I had focused on INSURV for months leading up to the major operations of COMPTUEX. I was tired and cranky and went to bed. We were in an ASWEX and the OODs left the tail out when ordered to shallow water. They knew I was tired and declined to wake me when ordered to the new station. So they tried to drive fast to keep array high enough to avoid the bottom.

He warned:

A major sign and danger for COs- when you get tired, cranky, you make mistakes and people avoid telling you important things. You may need to think about a new tack of ‘Ship, Shipmates, Self’ –Reverse it to ‘self-ship-shipmates’ because as CO you need to take care of yourself to be able to take care of the ship and your shipmates. COs must stay mentally aware, understand how they are perceived, and react to reports. Defer to nothing- and try to help when possible.

CO4 asserted, “I did have a band at both my changes of command.”

### **Sample Artifacts and Handouts**

CO4 provided no artifacts. But, he discussed his Command Philosophy, “We care, my priorities were Mission, People, and Equipment.”

### **Advice for Those Who Would Follow the Path to Command**

To Department Heads:

Know the gear- take care of the Sailors. Have a goal and begin keeping a log and notes on what your command philosophy will be. Copy all battle orders so you can reflect the best of a series of bests. Have the vision to keep a record of foreign (and U.S. ports you visit to know any difficulties and to help you remember where to go/ who or what to see/ where to eat / so when you revisit twenty years later, you can reflect on the changes.

To the XO's:

All about the crew- run the ship- be the XO, not the PCO.

To the CO's:

Make a list of what to avoid. Fight the ship- You'll spend 1/3 time focusing off the ship, and 1/3 of the time on the bridge. At the end of the day, it is your crew that makes or breaks you. Your biggest enemy is fatigue. Have a plan- have XO be ready to take over.

### **Drawings of Relative Challenges, Experience, and Performance**

CO4 thought his first CO's challenges were steady... and expected his to be great as he took command, and gradually fall as he got more comfortable in the job. His experience was much different. He thought his first ship's performance steadily improved since they were coming off [pre-command making their first deployment. His second ship was coming off deployment and he led it to a recovery and perhaps as they returned the performance began to drop- but not to the level it was when he relieved.

### **Summary of Analyses**

Further exploration of CO4's discussion generated several new themes to continue exploring throughout the analysis. CO4 represented those officers who benefitted from an era of acknowledging mistakes openly and striving to avoid recurrence. He was surprised by how much COs had to pay attention to programs. He developed a good conversation model for talking to his crew. He acknowledged his Spouse's support. CO4 echoed others who noted their later in the decade commands offered extra opportunities to excel. "My O-6 tour was more challenging both tactically and technically. I had to do more, was more stressed and making more decisions as a Captain in command." He suggested CO's check with other ships and learn how they

have handled problems similar to yours. He wondered: “Is every failure a leadership failure?”

CO4 demonstrated the *Execution* behavior “*know yourself*” (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 57). CO4 exemplified the naval officer’s quality of a “liberal education”(Bogle & Holwitt, 2004, p. 18). He was not just a Nuke. He is fluent in German and attained Foreign Area Officer specialist designation for Europe.

CO4 had great timing. He suffered several incidents that, with the support of his seniors, from which he was allowed to recover. Other COs who had similar instances their command tours were subsequently relieved following investigations that found other deep seated “Command Climate” issues. Those resulted in the damning phrase “Loss of Confidence in Command.” CO4 is the Survivor.

## **CO5. The Plugger**

CO5 commanded an MCM rotational crew from 1997 to 1998, homeported in Texas, but deployed to the Arabian Gulf for six months. He later commanded a DDG from 2001 to 2003 and participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

### **Personal Background/ Motivation**

CO5 entered the Navy through OCS. His first ship, a CGN, had excellent examples of a CO and XO who led directly and showed that a Navy life could be promising: “I had an inkling about command after first ship.” But, it was his decision to ask for an Engineering billet and a chance to serve on a ship stationed in Japan that “sealed my determined quest for command.” He served as the Damage Control Assistant on a cruiser and “loved that ship and the tour.”

### **Path to Command / Preparation/ JO Experiences/ Key People / Events**

He followed his division officer sea time, with a tour at OPNAV in OP06, then, following Department Head School, was assigned as the Combat Systems Officer on a CG, “strategically” homeported in New York. He reported mixed feelings:

In a word, disappointing- added responsibility, amazing workload, but the wardroom lacked the cohesion I had experienced on my first two ships.... But that was not always the case.... I continued to serve with great people- many of whom had early command, and the opportunity for early command appealed to me. I applied, screened, and was selected to go to a Mine Counter Measure (MCM) ship ‘rotational crew.’

CO5 reported:

No real barriers in my path to command, most people helped me get what I needed. SWOS has good pipelines, and the added benefit is that the setting provides venues for knowing people, networking, and learning the differences since you last served at sea.

## **Command Experience(s)/ Challenges**

CO5 commanded an MCM between 1997 and 1998 and a DDG between 2001 and 2003.

The Navy had moved several MCM hulls to Bahrain and rotated crews between hulls in the Mine Warfare homeport at Ingleside, Texas near Corpus Christi and the Persian Gulf. Three crews alternated between two ships making ownership of specific problems very challenging. When assigned to DDG, I found myself going from alone and unafraid as the CO of an SMCM to the most junior CO in the squadron.

**Challenges.** CO5 related four main challenges in his MCM Rotational Crew command tour: the job, the force, the staff and seniors, and his reluctance to deal with substandard performers.

The job- "Going from a Department Head on a cruiser to LCDR CO was a big transition. I had always had someone to look around and get advice from. Now I was on my own and expected to do it all."

The "force"-

I discovered the challenge of the mine force mindset and dark neglect. In 1998, the Mine Force was a niche force assigned to a niche mission. We were essentially Out of sight in Ingleside Texas, 60 miles away from Corpus Christi and out of mind. We were on the tail end of maintenance and funding, but on the front end of new personnel consolidation programs. The Mine force transition was turning all SMCM sailors into Minemen. And anyone with Mine ship experience could convert. So instead of Sailors with BM, QM, EN, ET, IC, RM experience, they were all Minemen and their training and preparation only focused on Mine Warfare gear and systems, so no one knew linehandling, navigation, diesel and mechanical systems, radios, or internal or external communications.

The staff/ and seniors-

There was a professional and supportive staff in Texas- as long as we were not in a crisis, but we were left alone to fend for ourselves. Low expectations opened up room for me as CO to prioritize and work on operational excellence. Even though there was an MCM Commodore by name in the Persian Gulf on deployment-he was better at showing us off than at providing support or helping us fight our

admin and maintenance battles. The Mine Warfare ship COs would periodically meet to discuss our problems and share solutions.

On the SMCM-

I was slow to hold people accountable for substandard performance- I didn't understand how to make them finish! I wanted to give them a chance, but never pushed them harder. We were not fast enough to always do the best/or even enough for success.

On seniors-

I also had some difficulties in dealing with a commodore who didn't read what I sent him. His preferred source of communication was by Email, but I discovered he only read the first 2-3 lines. I was surprised to discover he didn't know what was going on, so I never got much support from him or the system unless I did it myself.

### **Practices**

As the new CO I desired to establish my imprint on the way the ship operated. I was not impressed by their somewhat lackadaisical attitudes and began a tightening up program. I tried to make sure everyone knew the rules and that they were doing their utmost to follow them.

On getting around:

I would get around the ship often and ask myself- 'Did we execute/ complete the mission? Are our people advancing? What is the status of my officers completing their qualifications and learning added responsibilities? How many of my officers were completing milestone qualifications?

Acknowledging good performance:

I worked to acknowledge Sailors publically who did a good job and awarded some CO's NAM's. I learned throughout my tour to hold people accountable.

On making memories:

I maintained a journal for most of my time in command that recorded the experiences of the day and sometimes, my frustrations.

### **Accomplishments/ Disappointments**

I joined the DDG just out of a docking availability with its light off exam (LOE) complete and executed the whole run up to Iraqi Freedom. I was shocked by the

low amount of faith any senior showed in me on the DDG. The whole time in command, I was never asked an opinion, and discovered there were 500 ways to get in touch with you to keep advised- or confused. When the XO turned over, I discovered I was not at all prepared for the amount of Admin to execute. The new XO had a bumpy ride for a while in XO's transition. Having no XO tour was the price I paid for the SMC command. I missed some aspects of professional development in personnel and admin.

On the explosion of programs and information:

The new emphasis on programs such as AT/FP that required all hand to be proficient in weapons handling. On my first ships, we received tasking by high precedence radio circuits or messages only. There has been a 'Rabbit-like proliferation' of Command and Control systems on ships. Now phones, email, take away the time and close the latitude for a CO to execute command. I recall that the CIC set up included so many computers for TAO to answer to stay engaged. Was anyone watching what was happening? We need to find an appetite suppressant for this quest for instantaneous knowledge. Do we really need to know it all? Additionally, we are seeing more second-guessing from seniors due to ability to touch the ship.

On the causes:

The Navy made some bad decisions when we cut manning and reduced seniority. One program called 'TOP SIX roll down' has resulted in crews being smaller and more junior. Sailors (and officers) are receiving less training enroute to their assignments. There is a lack of mechanics. The nuts and bolts are not there.

And some additional background:

There is a belief that the Surface Navy could get by with less. It acts like the Navy's manpower shock absorber. The Balisle report documented the damage and it's a tall task to restore the effort.

CO5 also sounded other warning signals. "Do people going to command relish the opportunity?" Part of him was wondering about the six to eight years gap between Department Head tours and the new XO-CO fleetup assignment.

CO5 also thought that:

The CPO mess had become more complacent, almost packing it in. They were seeing themselves as 'mentors' vice knowledgeable experts/ executors of their Sailors day to day wrench turning. The focus on advanced degrees for senior

enlisted may have hurt rather than expanded their professional expertise and experience.

He reflected on the value of early command:

Most mine guys have stayed in and commanded a ship again at least once. Several have had multiple commands with increasing responsibilities at every level. Each time I commanded, I learned even more about command.

A word of caution:

I am not sure that the new career pattern using the XO-CO fleetup will prove to help the Surface Navy's readiness. It looks like there will be a six year gap between one's last Department Head ride and arrival as the XO on the ship they will later command.

### **Sample Artifacts and Handouts**

CO5 maintained a logbook during each of his Command experiences that contained his reflections about events that occurred while he was in command. Some selected entries from his first command experience:

D-4: Attended COs meeting with Commodore. Talked about various administrative and operational issues. Very collegial. A good group. At Captain's call with the crew, answered a few questions and put the words out that we'd be doing mandatory PT three times per week. Awarded Navy Achievement Medal to EN1 (SW). My first award ceremony as CO.

D-10: U/W this morning from B-5. Cooler weather caught the engineers by surprise—reduction gear lube oil temperature dropped during the night. Once underway, we conducted a burial at sea. We later conducted boat operations for NAVSEA observers. Returned to Berth B-5, STBD side to.

D-18: (Son's birthday). Paid call on Admiral in charge of Mine Warfare Command and spoke with his master chief. The Admiral's main concerns:

1. Keeping JO's in the Navy
2. Having fun
3. Not being afraid to take risks.

D-34: Bad news from our diesel engine inspector. #1A MPDE has major problems.... Spoke with Commodore late in day... told him I'd have recommendation by noon tomorrow

D-38: Enlisted exam results—50% not too shabby. ...Some computer virus wreaked havoc in radio. Had to reboot everything.

D-65: Held pre-deployment briefing w/ Family Service Center reps and our Chiefs. Attended my first local command ombudsman meeting. No adult supervision, lots of griping. Hope they're not all that bad....On loaded exercise mines.

D-73: Spoke at length w/ the XO. Told him that things just aren't getting done quickly/ thoroughly. Gave him a memo outlining some steps to take.

D-113-114: Departed Homeport enroute Bahrain via Amsterdam. What a disaster of a flight. Thought it would never end.

D-129: Got u/w at 1700; our tasking? Find downed helo. ...Found helo next day close to advertised position.

D-144: Put out a double O sweep ... but a hydraulic line ruptured. A quick thinking EN ran to the rupture, placed his hand over the leak, secured the gear, and set the brake. Once the gear was back on deck, I awarded the EN3 a NAM. What a superb morning!

D- 152: Relatively quiet morning. Was overflowed by the Iranian P-3 while conducting Q route survey. Sent weekly 'howgoesit' PFOR to commodore, and released message on the Lessons Learned from the hydraulic seal incident.

D-166: Painfully frustrating Admin day. Personally rewrote the pre-underway checklist. Determined that it's possible to come up with points off a chart and enter them into PINS. Got ticked off because someone on the bridge has been using my binoculars (starting to sympathize with Capt. Queeg here). Ended on several positive notes. Good engineering drill set. My Birthday celebration on the messdecks; good workout on O-3 level, great meeting in my cabin with current crop of FSA's (FA, SN, FN, MN3). Beautiful evening; not so oppressively hot. Maybe the Site TV gang will show a decent movie... maybe I'll get some sleep... although the Dhows will undoubtedly conspire against that.

D-194: Today's highlights were (1) GQ Battle Problem and (2) Fishing off the fantail. HM1 hooked one, but it got away before we could get it on deck. Did ESWS boards.

D-284: Relived the Tower of Babel as we docked the ship today. Will return to Homeport soon.

D-286: Crew turned over ship and returned to CONUS Homeport.

D-419: Fast Cruise (in Homeport) to get people thinking about being U/W again. First division is already trying to bring this hull up to our standards.

D-434: Now appears the anchor windlass, Boat davit, and # 2 SSDG need to be CASREP'd. Got frustrated with everybody and everything, had to leave the ship for a while.... Paid \$1.35 for gas at the Base.

D- 597: Happy Birthday to me. U/W following a 'SWO' night of exercises– Tactics, Flashing lights, maneuvering drills. Couldn't think of a better way to spend my 40<sup>th</sup>. If I had to be away from my family.

D:598: Picked up my remaining stuff. Said farewell to the folks on watch., then headed to the Fo'c'sle. We read our orders before all the crew assembled and I turned over the ship to the new CO of crew B, and headed home.

CO5 also kept another journal during his second command tour on a DDG.

Among selected entries were:

D-0: Relieved a CO. Ceremony was beautiful In Summer Khaki due to heat in Norfolk.

D-1: First full day. Have CMTQ coming up next Wednesday, and berth shift tomorrow. Had Family Support Group meeting, CMC and Ombudsmen were good. Lots of work to do, but we'll get there.

D-5: CMTQ kicked off early. Gremlins attacked early, but we kept chugging. After a slow start, the qual went fairly well. Bottom line: We won despite all 'The Sky is falling' forecasts.

D-7: Still working through comm issues and continuing to lean on bridge team....Along with XO and Weps, counseled ENS *Chuck Smith* about his UNSAT performance as Helm Safety officer.... Two individuals informed me he distracted the Helmsman and walked away from his station. Not a good start for him.

D-21: Ground hog day continues. Sea 8-10 feet cold, gloomy, ... Started off strong the tail–somewhat against the wishes of my SONAR techs who tried to cite Operational Risk Management (ORM) rationale for not doing it. I reaffirmed we had sufficient water depth, satisfactory sea state, and a trained team ready to go. So we streamed. ... Went down to CIC on status in CIC, No one monitoring the tail... Not good. Array data display indicated it was near the bottom, when it shouldn't have been. Again not good. Told TAO to recover the tail. Obviously, we have some training and awareness issues to work through. Had the privilege of pinning two new ESWS insignia on SK2 and SK3. Right out of an Old Spice advertisement- STBD bridge wing, high winds and seas, spray...absolutely perfect. Got reports of ice bergs approx. 60-75 miles NNE of our operating area–another twist.

D-28: Passed north of Faroes.... QM's changed charts...Started day with 5" PACFIRE...Got a fairly blistering email from Commodore around mid-day and spent the rest of the day trying to figure out how to answer it. I'm sure he meant well, but it came across as a significant indictment of the ship and of my materiel management track record for the first four weeks in command.....My reaction varied from amusement to bewilderment. Hope he doesn't take offence at the answer I provided....

D-30: Flag, his aide, and my Commodore embarked for our U/W. ... Good day and after dinner, had a good talk with the Commodore re: various stuff. He apologized for the email, in so many words--said that we went back and re-read it and realized that it sounded a bit harsh.

D-46: Back home. The 'Battle of Norfolk' is engaged. Repairs everywhere in engineering, Working SPY and CDLMS (*Common Data Link Management System*) concerns. Painting and preserving. Onloading stores. Some of my Buds from BUPERS came by for lunch. Nothing new, but good to see everyone. Beautiful day; took advantage to go home and cut the grass. Worked on CARBATGRU CDR's CONF presentation.

D-160: Flight quarters are killing us; helos everywhere. Started SCC-EX with Orange OPFOR today. Shadowed 'MEKO' (simulated by one of our DD's) all afternoon and into the night. Took heat for engaging 'MEKO' in self-defense of CVN. Stink with Commodore, Admiral over ROE interpretation. Not what I needed.

D-161: Spent morning on CVN meeting with Commodore and the CVBG commander, an Admiral, about my engagement decision. As I suspected, the real issue was that they never knew my intentions because (1) I never passed them directly, and (2) My CIC watch never passed them. So differences over self-defense aside, my real bust was in not pushing comms aggressively. No argument from me. Lesson learned; game on...

D-170: Still trying to get my DH's in synch; hasn't happened yet. Don't know why they can't get on top of their problem areas. Might need to change tactics. Coaching, mentoring, leading, and cheerleading have failed... Might be time to start wire-brushing.

Between D-175 and D-205, the ship repositioned from the Caribbean to be prepared to enter the Suez Canal. It was going to war to take part in Operation Iraqi Freedom, the plan to topple Saddam.

D-206: Have been in the 'Brickyard' - an area north of Port Said, the northern entrance of the Suez Canal. More rumors we'll go through soon. Don't know

whom/ what to believe now. Getting ready just in case. ... No one knows the Grand Plan. If Turkey doesn't give us a green light, the deck will be re-shuffled. Did Ensign counseling sessions. Continued to see a lot of Israeli and Egyptian air activity...My but things are congested down here.

D-210: Actually started at 2000 yesterday as we all began to move south towards Port Said..... we're last in a convoy of 13 ships, both USN and commercial.... Picked up our final pilot...and he rode with us the rest of the way to Port Said. True to their reputation, Canal Pilots are high maintenance. I forgot that I'm now back in the gift giving/ bribery part of the world. Disembarked pilot, began escorting an SSN. I've been up for 39 straight hours—not at my best....

D-220: Still a bit let down we didn't get to shoot last night. Coverage of the war on CNN and Fox is decidedly mixed. A few casualties and a handful of POWs are leading all of the handwringers to question everything. PLEASE. ... Wound up shooting two as Backups for another ship. Total from us: 15 so far.

D-234: Continued trucking at 18-20 kts toward our new PLP. Sounds strange, but great to be back in the Gulf. Familiar traffic patterns, familiar banter on Bridge-to-bridge. Wound up firing six primaries; all successfully transitioned to cruise.

The ship then left the Gulf and spent about a month conducting counter-piracy operations around the Bab-el-Mandeb.

D-240 Continued N. toward Port Suez...Then turned around to do more 'choke point transit' work around the Bab-el-Mandeb. Good news: we're not working for CTF 60...no CVBATGRU. Call it a win. Fairly quiet night. Spent much of it trying to work out the CTF 150 wiring diagram.

D-270: In the wee hours, we received an email from the Chief of Staff at CNSL, telling us to be ready for CART II and Initial Assessment 1-2 weeks after our post-deployment leave and upkeep period. I felt as if I had been hit by a Mack truck.

D-271: PIRACY EXTRAVAGANZA. As we were rounding the Horn of Africa and heading back into the Gulf of Aden, we copied a panicked broadcast on CH 16. An M/V was being chased by up to eight boats. We vectored in a Spanish P-3, which kept a lid on things. This occurred about 50 NM south of Al Mukalla in Yemen- the heart of Pirate Country. We were 120 NM away and sprinted up there at 30 KTS. Got there at 1300—found the pirate 'mother ship' as VID'd by the P-3. Spent eight hours; querying, going in circles, manning our VBSS teams, firing flares to get the ship to stop. Not good having multiple chains of command; we had to send everything via CHAT and HF. Wound up letting them go. Not often you nail a Pirate... We came close.

D- 278: Kept heading North with CG. Plunged into the Gulf of Suez and saw the traffic pick up 500%. Got geared up for tomorrow's run through the ditch.

D-282: Day 89 U/W since our last visit to Rota.... Continued steaming west toward Cartagena. Received word about 1830 that there were snags with our DIP CLEARANCE and LOGREP issues. Someone's dropped the ball.

D-298: Pre-entering port mania....Weather turned out to be beautiful. Best homecoming ever.

D-340: U/W for Tiger Cruise in VA CAPES. A bit rough out there... a lot of Tigers not feeling too good.

D-393: Recalled crew to make preps to sortie for Hurricane Isabel. ...My family headed inland for safe shelter. Forecast doesn't look good for us.

D-399: Headed back north during the night...entered channel... and eventually moored around 1100.

### **Advice for Those Who Would Follow the Path to Command**

CO5 provided the following advice:

To the Department Heads, he warned:

Your jobs would be hard, and many times, they will be left on their own to get the job done to complete the mission. Take advantage of the opportunity to work among the department heads on your ship, as well as see what a person with your job is facing on the other ships. Maintain an idea of how well your ship is meeting the standards of smartness.

To the XOs, he was emphatic in stating:

You are the XO- not the PCO-a ship can have only one CO at a time. Success requires your brutal honesty and loyal, unwavering support for the CO. Make sure it is rendered appropriately--most critical recommendation or suggestions for change should not occur on the Bridge during Sea Detail. Use your private access--be smart-- use the right place and right time. Do nothing to undercut the current CO.

He stressed the importance of rallying the Chiefs:

XOs must get all levels involved and really engage the Chiefs Mess. I fear they have possibly become more complacent. Some see themselves only as 'mentors and just want to pat themselves on the back for making it this far.

To the COs:

All the striving stops when you become the CO. Being CO is hard; and it's really hard when you do it right. You will face surprising leadership challenges. Relish the opportunity.

Get/ keep your CPOs engaged. Over the last few years, CPOs more complacent—get your chiefs involved—must train the E5/E6 who haven't had some benefits of the early education and training. Use them to help train your officers.

You will probably have more Ensigns than ships can handle. Carve out real jobs, with a CPO and real responsibilities. Have them focus on Training and watchstation qualifications.

CO5 asserted:

I think we can put COs in three buckets: Cabin Commandos, National Treasures, and Pluggers.

*Cabin Commandos* stay in their cabin, rarely venture out, and command via email.

*National Treasures* don't want to be bothered with any problems and cannot wait to get transferred back to DC.

*Pluggers* are not very flashy, but quietly and professionally go about their task of making their ships better. They understand the job that must be done and every day stay in the fight. I'd like to consider myself one of them.

### **Drawings of Relative Challenges, Experience, and Performance**

CO5 noted that his challenges and the pattern were commensurate with his first CO's until CO5 took his ship to war. Then the challenge expanded and remained high throughout the operations. He completed nearly a full cycle on the MCM assignment, reliving just after the basic phase and turning over during the next Basic phase. On his DDG, he relieved just following the Maintenance phase (at a time when the Balisle report noted that ships emerging from Maintenance still needed more work to make them sound). He turned over following the return of the ships that participated in the first phases of Iraqi Freedom and had entered the Maintenance phase. He rated his

performance in O-4 command as “Above Average” and graded himself “Average” based on “Above Average” ratings in “Strike, Engineering, Training, Qualifications, and Gunnery.” But stuck at “Average” in “Comms, Supply, and Medical.”

### **Summary of Analyses**

In reviewing CO3’s responses, several themes emerged to augment the preselected categories. CO5 elaborated on previous concerns with the changes in Navy Force structure. In the Mine Force, a rate consolidation was taking place that served to strip the SMCM’s of experienced deck, engineering, and communications specialists. CO5 was the first to bring up the idea of the CO mutual protection society. CO5 also noted the net effect of new programs. He discussed proliferation of communications and ability to manage from on high. Further exploration of CO5’s discussion generated several new themes to continue exploring throughout the analysis. CO5 represented the bulk of Navy ship COs, extremely competent and experienced, and trained in the way of the sea and of people. Most are “pluggers.”

CO5 demonstrated the *Execution* behavior “reward doers” (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 57). CO5 exemplified the naval officer’s quality of “*patience*” (Bogle & Holwitt, 2004, p. 18). CO5 exemplified the concepts of Servant leadership. CO5 demonstrated the “C” (Confidence) component of the RICH model.

CO5 was self-titled as the “Plugger,” which inspired the researcher to label each CO. He was self-described as not flashy, but had a vision of what a squared away ship and crew should look like, what their day-to-day performance should be, and how well the Captain and crew cared for the ship and those who served in it.

## **CO6. The Executioner**

CO6, a nuclear-trained SWO, commanded a DD 1996 to 1998 deploying to the Arabian Gulf, and a CG July 2001 to July 2003 during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

### **Personal Background/ Motivation**

CO6 recalled his desire for command stemmed from an event he witnessed as an Ensign on his first ship a DDG. He saw a CG pull in and noted how “squared away it looked.” He discussed his observations with a friend from that ship and “decided I wanted to be a CO like that.”

My first ship had run aground and had bad things going on, but when the new CO came aboard, I recognized the power of a great leader. We had been screwed up for a while, but that CO turned us around, and the ship got the Battle E ten consecutive times until it was decommissioned.

### **Path to Command / Preparation/ JO Experiences/ Key People / Events**

CO6’s path to command continued as he was assigned to a hydrofoil (PCH) as a LTJG to be the Chief Engineer.

We had many adventures, and it was fun when it worked. ... But we did have some problems. We had a main space fire, damaged a reduction gear, blew a main engine, and had a missile explosion on the fantail following a collision at sea. But I learned a lot, got to drive the ship, and play as a red force in every Fleet exercise. From there I went to the Naval Postgraduate School and was recruited to be a nuke.

He continued:

After nuke school and prototype, I was sent to a job on a CGN, and then to a DD as the Ops Department Head. Then I served at SURFPAC as a type desk officer, and after thinking I would go to a CGN as the XO, was instead selected, then sent to a CG as its XO. I learned how much I needed to know as XO—and got to run the ship—It helped shape my command philosophy: ‘Cleanliness, Safety, Battle Readiness.’ I had experienced good and bad COs—very important for my development.

He got a bonus:

I then was sent to teach at SWOS in the PXO course, and built my Battle Orders from the 'best of breed' in SWOS's CO archives. ... Then I was on to Command.

He knew who "UBL" was:

Following my DD CO tour, I was sent to be a planner at a cruise missile support activity (CMSA) where I knew we were at war with UBL (Usama Bin Laden). Even I was struck by his audacity on 9/11.

### **Command Experience(s)/ Challenges**

CO6 commanded a DD 1996–1998 deploying to the Arabian Gulf, and a CG July 2001–2003 during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

#### **Challenges**

I took over when the DD was struggling to meet minimum standards and figuring out how to integrate women following the decree that opened all ships to women, ready or not. The Navy did not do it well. .... We made some local alterations that improved some living conditions. It was my first experience dealing with women in the crew of a Navy ship that was not prepared to avoid fraternization.... I found that in most aspects, I could treat them as adults, but in terms of fraternization, I found that treating the Sailors more like high school kids, or as my own teenagers, helped. Laying out clear guidelines and tolerating no violations allowed the crew to mold itself into one focused unit.

He recalled interesting times with his boss:

I was also dealing with a boss who was not on that ship. I was not sure if the Boss understood how much confidence he should have had in us.... By asking around the waterfront, and starting a weekly COs breakfast, we discovered that we all faced similar challenges from our relationship with the Commodore. In that way, the COs became able to care for each other.

But not all Bosses were difficult:

On the DD, we changed home port- deployed to Arabian Gulf as the TLAM ready ship as part of a three ship Middle East Force (MEF). The commodore, CDS 50, rode us, and I learned the joy of the good side on dealing with my ISIC. He later wrote me a very good letter and helped me screen for major command.

He was first to say that the ship's appearance and performance did match its reputation:

I had a CG with a great reputation, but the reality was different. I realized we were in trouble looking at INSURV. I had been through INSURV on several other ships and knew what it took. I found our gas turbine intakes in horrible shape. So I sent CASREPs—but was told I couldn't do that, so I argued to get appropriate funding, parts and materiel, and maintenance attention to help us be ready for the inspection.

Things COs have to do:

I had to train people how to inspect and how to fix. I inspected a set of spaces every week. When I returned to the space in next cycle, I started with my original list to check that defects from the earlier inspection were fixed. I finally got most on board as we improved our cleanliness and, subsequently, operational readiness.

Things COs get to do:

My cruiser was BMD capable so we did a lot of testing and we had the opportunity to drive up into Glacier Bay. One the way out we hit what we later surmised was a 'deadhead submerged. It made lots of noise like a shoe in a dryer. An inspection showed that we suffered a bent screw tip. Had we run aground, all would have been damaged. We got that fixed and returned to sea for Strike Group training. We lost one of our helos when the pilot flew into water on approach to a smaller ship. He had violated standard non-visual flight rule procedures. Luckily, we were able to recover the crew.

He was forehanded and ready:

We happened to be at the Naval Weapons Station on September 11 2001, and I loaded some war shots, actually in violation of SURFOR's policy of not carrying around live ammo until just before we deployed. So when the call came, we departed and went to a position to attain an air defense posture off of LAX. Had we not had those missiles, we would have been stuck in San Diego twiddling our thumbs.

He spoke of the path to War:

We now earnestly continued deployment preparations and deployed to the Arabian Gulf in 2002. We had begun our trip back to the States in late 2002 and did a port visit to Perth, Australia. Rumors of war against Iraq and Saddam were swirling. We had started for the States in time to get back for Christmas, but were turned around near Guam and told to return to Perth, where we stayed and celebrated the Christmas holidays while the CVN's flight deck was being re-non-

skidded. We then knew we'd be going to the Gulf soon. Upon our arrival, the Fifth Fleet commander recalled how we had, a few months earlier, executed the 'Alpha Whiskey' role as the Air Defense Commander for the Gulf. So we served as AW for the first phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

In reflecting back, he felt ready for the task before him:

The Navy helped prepare the ship and me personally for that assignment. I had made it a point to learn everything I could about Air Defense and how to best position and control the air defense assets. The pre-cruise workups and all the practice we did made us a formidable foe for any Iraqi or other forces air or missile attack.

### **Practices**

CO6 expressed, "Command demands continuous personal involvement and a driving dedication to a 'Mission-focus.'" He continued:

I had experienced good and bad COs, and both proved important for my development. I made my priorities clear: 'mission, training, material readiness, safety' and espoused them often. I knew we had to develop and execute many processes to begin and sustain progress. I knew the processes needed to be set and practiced to perpetuate the various programs after I left. Some basic standards included: all gear works or it is CASREP'd; Ship is clean, and maintained clean because we have a set of procedures we follow to clean, maintain, and assess our performance.

What it means:

This means that I spent hours teaching my leaders how to inspect, document, plan, and fix. I found I had to clarify standards often. To achieve Battle readiness, you have to have Materiel readiness.

I set a goal:

I decided for us to work to meet 'Battle E' criteria. They are standards for training, material readiness, and manning. I made sure we were creating enough experience; since, at SWOS PXO, I had observed that, sometimes, the Surface Force allowed folks to arrive at their command assignments without the requisite sea time.

## **Accomplishments/ Disappointments**

Why I was ready when called:

Since I had made it a point to be ship's company, I was able to anticipate and be prepared to face numerous challenges. I knew upon my arrival that we were in trouble with pending INSURV. But we focused and made it. I thought being at sea and being on ships was vitally important to my preparations to become CO.

Effect of 911 on Command:

9/11 made it easier to be the Captain. The emphasis on Force Protection (FP) after *Cole* placed extra burdens on ship's force. My assignment at CMSA gave me knowledge of Usama bin Laden and I knew we were after him. I had loaded warbirds so my CG happened to have live ammo when 9/11 happened and we were chosen to guard LAX.

The value of experience at sea:

My ship experience helped me deal with the hard challenge of integrating Women on the DD. I also had to deal with an overbearing Commodore. He tried to get me to focus more on engineering programs. The commodore was starting to micromanage a guy who had been a 1200 psi EOOW, and a GS EOOW so I basically ignored him and the other COs and I created the CO Mutual Protection Society for defense of the waterfront.

## **Sample Artifacts and Handouts**

CO6 provided examples of his command philosophies and some other guidance he published to the wardroom. CO6's priorities: Safety, Battle Readiness, Attitude, Cleanliness, Having Fun. He laid out these expectations:

1. Keep the ship safe.
2. Leadership needs to come from all directions.
3. Training for success.
4. Materiel readiness.
5. Procedural compliance.
6. Positive Attitude.
7. Enthusiasm.

8. Personal Standards: I will not tolerate Dishonesty, Prejudice, Sexual Harassment, Fraternalization, Drug or Alcohol Abuse, Hazing.
9. Keep the ship clean.

### **Advice for Those Who Would Follow the Path to Command**

CO6 provided excellent advice:

To the Department Heads:

As the Department Head, you need to gain a perspective that allows you to learn/prepare to so you can handle problems outside your main area of expertise. Know your people—who can you tap? Who can you trust? Learn to be a ship's key watchstander: EOOW, TAO, OOD. Think about you as CO. What do you have to do to be professionally ready?

To the XOs:

Remember that you are the XO. I taught PXOs at SWOS that enabled me to gain valuable insights on the factors for success in that position. Figure out how to 'make the CO let you run the ship.' Give him confidence that you can do it. Use your time as XO to set your philosophy for how you want to get the mission done. CO only gets it done through the people on the ship.

To the COs:

Square away the inside before shifting your focus outside. You only have about 3 months to change; and probably less as a fleet-up from XO.

As CO make a list of 10 things that are important. Pick three or four of the most broke and decide to fix in first three months- resist things you love that are working—some work—some don't. Work on things that are not working—or the most broken— until it can meet standards. If not, you'll always be reacting to crisis du jour.

### **Drawings of Relative Challenges, Experience, and Performance**

CO6 noted that his challenge on his DD was slightly less than this first CO's on the older DDG. On his cruiser, he thought the peacetime challenge was very much lower than an early cruiser CO's but ramped up after 9/11 and continued to climb. He also faced leadership changeovers. He had five CHENGs, similar on DDG- IDTC.

The 27-month schedule on the CG post 9/11, began at CART–TG–AVAIL–INSURV–NEdge–FLT EX–lull–Deploy– war– return.

He showed the ship’s performance rise during ATG and the availability all through preparations for deployment. And then even out at a high rate.

A down side occurred when after return from deployment, the Admiral in charge of the TYCOM came on and told crew to watch him for his last month!

### **Summary of Analyses**

In reviewing CO6’s responses, CO6 reinforced the concept of the effect of one CO on the next generation of officers. He demonstrated initiative and reflected on the importance of a Mentor. CO6 represented the concept of forehandedness discussed in Chapter 2. He acted on his own authority and was prepared on 9/11.

CO6 demonstrated the *Execution* behavior “*Insist on realism*” (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 57). CO6 exemplified the naval officer’s quality of “*courtesy*” (Bogle & Holwitt, 2004, p. 18). CO6 exemplified the Transformational leader. CO6 demonstrated the “C” component of the RICH model.

CO6 earned the title “Executioner” due to his forehandedness and ability to marshal the effort to meet each challenge. He knew he wanted to achieve excellence in every endeavor.

## **CO7. The Busy Bee**

CO7, a nuclear-trained SWO, commanded a DD between 1995 and 1997, and a CG from August 2001 to August 2003 and participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom. This was the first interview to span two tapes, and was the third longest lasting interview with additional insights. He discussed the effects of Individual Augmentees (IA's), the focus which Combat action gives, and concepts of Marching the plant—and effectiveness as a JO (7/10 vs 70/100).

### **Personal Background/ Motivation**

CO7 disclosed:

My father is a retired Navy Master Chief. We were in Japan when Roger Staubach showed up on the cover of Boy's Life. From then on, I was hooked. I wanted to be in the Navy and focused on getting in to the Academy. I think I knew I wanted to command for sure when touring USS *California* during her visit to the Yard at Annapolis in the Spring of 1974. Command at sea as a possibility became a reality to me after my second division officer tour on my second CGN. I was gaining self-confidence in terms of my belief in my ability to lead and master the SWO craft. When a CO on a CGN, said 'you should do this' and for you to be a good CO, you will go to grad school, not be a company officer at the Naval Academy. I felt 'this is really what I want to do.' I had seen four remarkable chief engineers, three COs, and five XOs. Each of them had been really great.

### **Path to Command / Preparation/ JO Experiences/ Key People / Events**

CO7 was a "SWO-N." He noted:

My tours in succession included nuke school, JO on CGN as the CRA, another CGN as the MPA. I qualified as nuclear engineer, OOD and SWO. I went to PG (postgraduate) school getting Masters Degrees in Naval Architecture and Mathematics, and, following, Department Head School, to an old steam DDG as Ops. I learned tactics and how to optimize older systems; and dived into the explicit details of ballistics and gunnery.

He continued his career:

Then, I was detailed to the oldest CGN as the Electrical Officer where I worked as the senior propulsion plant Drill Monitor. I also qualified and stood watch as the cruiser's TAO and Strike Group's Alpha Whiskey. As XO, I avoided an assignment to be the XO during a CGN refueling, and went to a steam cruiser in a New Threat Upgrade (NTU) overhaul. It had scenes reminiscent of *The Caine Mutiny*. But, the situation improved, and I had a great opportunity to fix the crew, conduct vital weapons testing, and refine my training team leader experience. The CG deployed to Desert Storm operating in the northern Arabian Gulf, from whence we observed several incidents that brought home that our real business was warfare.

And added:

From my XO tour, I joined the Joint Staff leading the Command Center at the Pentagon. I picked up nine different jobs, gave VIP tours, and regularly briefed Congressmen, Senators, and their staffs. My work set a standard for that job and a requirement that future Command Center Directors should be chosen from experienced CO screened SWO-Ns.

CO7 discussed barriers:

I don't think that there were any barriers other than my own shortcomings in terms of accepting the guidance and mentoring I was given. I knew that I ran hard on emotion and that was both good and bad. It also made me take chances. My biggest challenge was putting that aside, especially accepting that errors were primarily of my making ('they don't play bad, we coached bad') and thus slowing down and understanding the 'theory' (as in theory to practice) of what we were attempting to do and the actual outcome were key.

Origin of the "Busy Bee":

I had a CO explain it to me this way: 'Most JO's do about ten things and usually succeed on seven. You, on the other hand, try to do 100, but since you only succeed 70% of the time, you fail more than the other guys. Now that's not bad necessarily, because you are making positive contributions to our ship's programs and warfighting readiness. If we can harness that, by the time you get to be CO, you're performance ratio will be closer to 95%.' It was an interesting way of saying 'keep trying, but understand why we have to watch you closely and often seem to hold you back.'

## Command Experience(s)/ Challenges

CO7 explained timing:

When I screened for command I was first going to be assigned to a cruiser scheduled to decommission within six months of my arrival. That would not have been a good fit. I was then sent to an older SPRUANCE DD, and learned Gas Turbine engineering and how to shoot Tomahawks. Following that experience, I served as the Engineer on a CVN where I gained the confidence of Naval Reactors' engineers. I also experienced great Naval Aviators as senior mentors on my CVN and Joint Staff tours. I attended the 'SOSMRC' during my CO pipeline. I failed to understand why SWOS got rid of SOSMRC. During the course, I became a mentor to fellow Strike Group COs. I'm not a DESRON kind of guy.

CO7 focused on "mission":

On the CG, post 9/11, we committed to mission and getting ready to go. Pre-9/11, we had been committed to self-improvement. The mindset changed essentially overnight. Some skill sets and experiences were missing. Events such as maneuvering during UNREP, conducting CVN plane guard duties, and 'tow and be towed'—the real ship handling skills—had to be reviewed and relearned through constant practice and attention to detail.

CO7 assessed his preparation:

I think I was as well prepared in terms of jobs, sea time, and training as I could have been. The advantage of Nuclear Power cannot be overstated in terms of readiness for Command at sea. That, and the fact that I had COs and Detailers who mixed my tours to get me exposed (like *Hoel*, *Horne*, and *Enterprise*) to the greatest breadth of ship types made all the difference. I was lucky in that the vast majority of my COs were fabulous mentors. I profited from great mentors on CVNs.

CO7 reflected:

CG tour presented outstanding opportunities to apply what I had learned. The Nuke program gave me confidence. I began my tour the Friday before entering a DSRA, which was also the installation period for CEC (Cooperative Engagement Capability). The ship was in Dry-dock on 9/11. After leaving the Shipyard in early Feb, participated in several underway periods, but the two best before COMPTUEX/ JTFEX were JCIET-02 (April '02) and BALTOPS/Neptune Warrior (June '02). These really wrung out the plant, the combat system, and our procedures.

CO7 recalled:

We completed the deployment workup cycle in early February '03, and immediately left for OIF. We arrived in theater on 23 February, and stayed throughout OIF. We shifted from the Eastern Med to the NAG (Northern Arabian Gulf) in early April, then stayed to escort the NIMITZ CVBG. We conducted a series of Special Operations in the NAS (North Arabian Sea) in late May, then ran back through the Med in June, returning home on 3 July 03. I turned over the CG'03 to my relief on 22 Aug.

### **Challenges**

CO7 described changes:

I viewed the challenges of command along lines of changes in expectations; we had different OPTEMPO and missions. Additionally, we faced reductions in funding and changes in budget/ programs. We also made some cuts that reduced basic PMS practices.-We couldn't fix many systems since folks didn't get advanced training.

CO7 described bosses:

In CDR command, I had to spend a lot of time learning to deal with my Commodore. I had designed a scheme for ASW ops in the Taiwan Straits as we were sent there to show support for Taiwan when China threatened to disrupt their presidential elections in 1996. He was not impressed that I took the initiative to apply my ASW knowledge and try to maximize our capability.

As a Captain, we faced a 'Zero defect mentality.' No one wanted to follow the Naval Reactors practice of holding a truth-seeking debrief and critique. And afterwards, have the leaders take the time to design and implement a plan to fix what went wrong, and then return in a few months to check on the solution. Our Flag had high expectations for ship performance since he had been a 'Big time cruiser' captain. So we took on the challenge of exceeding that level of performance.

CO7 described falling expertise in Naval warfare:

I noted that many officers' Shiphandling confidence had waned. The Department Heads lacked some tactical fundamentals and many folks discovered they had forgotten to press in to know why we did some things certain ways. In ASW, passive Sonar tactics had been forgotten.

CO7 postulated some causes:

In tracking the changing tempo of operations from the late 70's to today, we had gone from a 'Med/Pac Cruise' (many port calls, liberty, and some big exercises) to a 'Gulf Deployment' (few port calls, very high OPTEMPO, very high operational excellence) environment. We have less time to 'just drive' and less money to 'get fixed' than ever before. Unfortunately, the training required to overcome these challenges (Aviation and the Submarine force have NOT succumbed to watering this down) has also been dramatically cut. We are training to be 'average' (or barely certified) and not striving to be the 'best.' Thus our Department Heads and XOs (many now COs) do not have the tools to cope.

CO7 described some gaps:

The measures are there, but we keep looking for quick fixes. PMS, Engineering Drills, CS performance, advancement percentages, departmental awards all tell us what we need to know, but we seem unwilling to actually accept what they tell us. Today's Sailor is every bit as motivated as those in any previous generation were, and certainly is NOT avoiding the draft. Yet we 'dumb down' our training, and expect them to work with antiquated tools and methods. They can exceed our expectations, easily. We need to challenge them, but we need to return to theory and standards based training to do so.

### **Practices**

CO7 recalled:

The *Cole* attack affirmed the importance of Fundamentals and reinforced the concept that we need to know/ learn 'why.' On the DD my warfighting priorities were Strike, ASW, and Outboard. But to be able to fight, we must be able to get there.

I felt that the only way I could ensure that the crew would be confident in their leadership, including myself, was for us to be present and to devote ourselves to them. That means long days, doing stuff for everyone else, and sleeping less. But, when I needed the ship to perform, in both instances, but certainly on the CG, the only question was, what else? Certainly that can't be all we have to do?

One early CO, the same one who taught me the 7/10 vs 70 of 100 rule, stressed 'Marching the ship.' On the DD, the crew knew I was going to be anywhere. They loved the chance to show me what they were doing. I worked to make sure the officers were getting out to their spaces with the CPOs.

On the cruiser, no one was afraid the CO was going to show up. And when they were afraid when I stumbled upon some—just like 'little kids'—they

knew what they were doing was not right. Being present helps enforce ‘attention to detail.’

*Cole* taught us we are at our best U/W (underway) and brought home the value of Damage Control. As XO, Reactor Officer, and now a DD CO, got the Chaplains and Legal folks involved in building whole ship preparedness. As CG CO, we practiced AT/FP in Northern Europe port visits.

In the Gulf, I used women as the air warning order transmitters so as not to sound too belligerent. We also had to learn to ‘be not afraid’ around loaded weapons. I stressed qualifications. Naval officers, especially Department Heads, can't *not* be a TAO. Chief engineers included.

I worked hard and continuously to clarify expectations—what really is the bar? Many of the JOs who served on IAs (Individual Augmentees) could see what levels ships are performing to. To get back, they can evoke a cool, clear combat mindset.

In assessing performance, on my walk arounds and discussions, I sought to answer questions such as ‘Is the ship better than the day I got it? Has everyone in the crew advanced, qualified, and been recognized to their limits? Have we supported the Group Commander in achieving his mission? If we could answer those honestly and then move forward, then we were on the right track. There are lots of metrics within those, but big things like PMS, OCSOT, GQ, CIC and Engineering Drills, and ship cleanliness tell you what you need to know. You have to accept the results and resolve to improve them when they're poor.

### **Accomplishments/ Disappointments**

CO7 noted:

I thought we did a good job on both ships of balancing PMS and training with being really ready. Our younger JOs have combat action ribbons so they understand difference between BS requirements and real work. Both crews wanted to do more than the minimum! During Combat drills, guys begin to ‘beat the scenario.’ We kept trying to test our team vs the ship/ system.

We prepped hard for the semi-annual advancement exams. I had a pair of RMs ace their tests with scores so high they were suspected of cheating. In a specially monitored retest, one aced it again and the other made a 98! We developed officers and enlisted folks who were confident, competent, and inquisitive.

## Sample Artifacts and Handouts

CO7 provided his command philosophy and a copy of the advice he sent to a CO facing deep maintenance and coming out. In a letter to a serving CO asking for advice on how to prioritize getting out of a shipyard and back into combat readiness, he wrote:

There are two driving leadership teams, the 'triumvirate' of the CO/XO/CMC, and the 'Inner Circle' (like the President's Cabinet, your name choice goes here) of your DHs, the remaining Senior Chiefs and Master Chiefs. (Also recommend you find the hottest second tour JO as the liaison to the rest of the Wardroom, more to follow, but you probably know why). This JO must be someone who already knows YOU and 'gets it' so it isn't necessarily the single longer tour one or the one who broke out number one from your predecessor.

The reason for exclusion is control, decisiveness, and quite honestly exclusivity. The reason for the two layers is that you need master minds and you need 'iron majors/knights' who will zealously carry out the directions. The JO will be 'the insider' and make sure that the rest of the Wardroom is keyed in and you will get the reaction.

Thoughts on any money you either scrape up or get freed, put it into HM&E. The Combat System will get supported, but steam, firemain, drains, hull valves, CHT, etc. will get ignored. Next priority is anything for the Crew's Mess, then CPO Mess, then Wardroom, then UCC, then you. Those two things will pay very long term dividends, and build HUGE morale.

As to some other questions. Take your triumvirate and map out the priorities, give the inner circle the guidance and give them 2 days to rack and stack and develop a strategy. While you can, you are spot on, do the DEEP preservation and bilge work where you can't get back in when stuff is re-landed. Do the Evaps NOW if they are still installed!!!! The next issue is EVOLUTIONS. See if you can get an exchange program with another CO or two to build a composite ECCTT. That way, you get the best of all ships 'best practices.' Drills are nothing more than evolutions done fast. If evolutions suck, what's the point? Everyone on your LOA (*Light Off Assessment*) and UD (*Underway Demonstration*) watchbill should do the evolution, satisfactorily, at LEAST 3 times.

Final thought on this segment, once standards are established in Engineering, make them SHIPWIDE. Procedural compliance throughout makes life easier, there is a misconception that only Engineers need to do that stuff. The same applies to all the common programs, Tagout (which you can survive is equal, but which will KILL you if there are differences), cleanliness, PMS, and critiques. Critique EVERY walkthrough, every set of evolutions. One of the

three of you and the Engineer (later ITT, or CSTT leader) should observe and comment last. This will keep the 'us vs. them' syndrome to a minimum.

In order to attain a three section watch you will need to be inventive and cannot accept 'paradigms' from any group. The shipwide three section is the best approach and the key for me was to put talent where it paid off the most. My Warrant Engineer turned out to be one phenomenal OOD, I just wouldn't let he and the CHENG be on the same watch team. It also meant qualifying EVERY Eng CPO as something, preferably EOOW, and also forced PO1s and PO2s into the mix; ended up with five PO1 and PO2 EOOWs, all JOs, regardless of Department as well. Also get your CTs in CIC.

One last piece. You are having the best ride out there, but you need to make the yards a 'not so fun' experience. At the same time, keep all but a very limited group 'leashed and muzzled' so that work at the deckplate level stays harmonious. I only let the XO and EMO be 'unleashed and unmuzzled' until the last 3 weeks in the entire avail. At that point I ANNOUNCED (sic) that the leashes and muzzles were coming off, and the shops and Ships Sup should stand by. I learned that on ENTERPRISE from VADM Malone, and it works. You won't believe how much gets done and how popular you become in one day!

### **Advice for Those Who Would Follow the Path to Command**

CO7 offered this advice:

To the Department Heads:

Be technically competent on all your gear and how your people know. Use the concept of 'Prove it.' I think the best guidance on how to do your job, learn your job, and be technically competent (thus confident) which is what all Department Heads must do, came from my first CO, 'march the plant.' It didn't really hit me until I was in Command how much power that statement had. It was backed by another COs' admonition to 'inspect continuously, clean always, and when really needed, paint.' Both of these practices force leaders to be in their spaces, learn their equipment, talk to and get to know their people. Being a Department Head is the last chance to know specifics and the first chance to gain integrated plant (ship) knowledge. As the TAO, optimize the ship. Be ready to demonstrate you are ready for next level. Ask: are you as good as the best? You'll develop confidence for command based on what you really know and can do.

To the XOs:

You have to maintain an even bigger picture. Why do all Sailors have to mess cook? The best advice I ever got regarding how to be an XO came from my fourth CO. He said that there were three things that the XO had to do: (1) Take charge of everything within the lifelines (unless otherwise directed) and ask the

CO what he wanted to participate in. (2) Make sure that everything the CO had to do got done, even if that meant having him do something ‘mundane’ he didn’t like. It also meant that he should have complete confidence that if he had to sign something officially, but hadn’t done it, YOU had done it. (3) UNODIR, the XO was the ‘bad cop’ and in any event, there should be no way for anyone other than the CO to know when ‘tough’ policies were his. This one will probably get tested in the XO to CO fleetup as we work those roles out.

To COs:

One very important job is clarifying expectations—what really is the bar and why? Being CO is the ultimate coaching job! I had my JOs spend a week in plant, a week in Combat, a week on bridge to build resilience and made all stand proficiency watches so they did not forget where they came from. We were cross-trained so we could handle any emergencies.

Being a good CO is much harder. There isn’t just one thing, but a synthesis of things that come together. The list of things that aided me and kept me focused:

- ‘March the Plant’ Except now it is the ship, unless your crew sees you, everywhere, and you are not afraid to ask questions, take questions, admit shortcomings, and teach, they will NOT think you’re technically competent or confident.
- ‘They don’t play bad, I coached bad’ Sailors are amazing, they can do anything, if you don’t set the bar of achievement high, they will not exceed it. They do what they are taught and emulate what they perceive. Thus, if there is a shortcoming in performance, it is a CO issue, not a Sailor issue.
- ‘Emit No fear’ This doesn’t mean that you can’t (and in some instances should) be afraid or concerned, but the CREW can’t see that. There is help (especially the XO and CMC) but fear drives one to ‘shoot the messenger’ and erodes confidence. If there is an error (and anyone who says they never made one in Command isn’t telling the truth), then admit it and move on. I can’t say I never lost my temper, but I worked very hard not to, and it paid off.
- ‘Qualifications of a Naval Officer’ This little quote attributed to the writings of John Paul Jones is worth reading and pondering over and over. This timeless set of standards from *Reef Points* only started to make sense when I was in command. I had this and Kipling’s ‘*IF*’ posted at the door of my at sea cabin on both ships. Not only did I read these daily, I made all the JO’s do so when entering the room. Amazing what one can learn from these classics.

## **Drawings of Relative Challenges, Experience, and Performance**

CO7 thought his challenges as a CG CO going to war were greater than the challenges of his first ship's CO; but that his challenges on a DD were less than those faced by the same CO. Ship performance on DD actually showed below what he inherited due to the employment.

## **Summary of Analyses**

In reviewing CO7's responses, he was another who asked: "What is it with Flag officers?" We have become a Zero defect organization. COs must work on developing talent. CO7 demonstrated the *Execution* behavior "*follow through*" (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 57). CO7 exemplified the naval officer's quality of "*charity*" (Bogle & Holwitt, 2004, p. 18). CO7 demonstrated the "H" component of the RICH model.

CO7's Name as the Busy Bee derived from recollections such as this:

An early CO told me: 'Most JO's do about ten things and usually succeed on seven. You, on the other hand, try to do 100, but since you only succeed 70% of the time, you fail more than the other guys. Now that's not bad necessarily, because you are making positive contributions to our ship's programs and warfighting readiness. If we can harness that, by the time you get to be CO, you're performance ratio will be closer to 95%.' It was an interesting way of saying 'keep trying but understand why we have to watch you closely and often seem to hold you back.' It was an interesting way of saying 'keep trying, but understand why we have to watch you closely and often seem to hold you back.'

## **CO8. The Mentee**

CO8 commanded an FFG from 2008 to 2010.

### **Personal Background/ Motivation**

CO8 was commissioned through the ROTC program and had been selected for nuclear propulsion training. Following nuclear power school, he attended the Division Officer course at SWOS. He related:

It was 18 months from when I left college until I set foot on my first ship, the original CVN. I was more mature than most Ensigns and cut my teeth on ENTERPRISE. It's said 'if you can be successful on the Big E, you can be successful anywhere.' I qualified as nuclear engineer, then transferred to an AEGIS CG. I observed major command COs on the aircraft carrier and saw how COs set the tone. By time I left the ENTERPRISE, I was sure I wanted to be a CO.

### **Path to Command / Preparation/ JO Experiences/ Key People / Events**

He recalled:

I had a normal SWO-N career path. After my second division officer tour on the CG, I went to the Naval Postgraduate School and earned a Master's Degree in Financial Management. Then, following Department Head School, I served on a DDG, as OPS, joining the ship during pre-deployment workups. I served under three great COs. We shot TLAM, and were awarded the biannual USS *Arizona* Memorial Trophy for superior performance in all facets of combat readiness and battle efficiency. All leaders from that ship have held Command at O-5 or above.

From there, I was a PA (Principal Assistant) back on CVN 65. My CO there is now VCJCS (Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff). I spent a year at JPME at ICAF (Industrial College of the Armed Forces at National Defense University) in DC. I was ready to go be an XO.

I was first named to be assigned to a DDG, but later my assignment was switched to a DD. The DD CO had called BUPERS looking for a new XO. One of my cohorts from the DDG was a detailer, and he said 'I have just the guy.' So the BUREAU sent me to the older DD. As I arrived, the CO confessed 'I am dog tired, I cannot connect with crew, you've got it!' Essentially, I became the defacto CO as XO. So over the next two years, I helped the CO lead the ship during their workup, through the deployment to OIF, and then return for post deployment

leave and upkeep and to the Decommissioning process. The whole tour was a tremendous preparation for command.

CO8 continued:

From my XO tour, I was sent to DC to work for the CJCS J8 Force Structure, Resources, and Assessment Directorate as my PG school and JPME payback tour. I served as EA (Executive Assistant) for two SWO Flag officers. I was screened for command and awaiting orders.

When the call to announce my command assignment came, thinking surely I'd be going to a 'DDG, Anywhere', the Flag officer informed me I'd be going to an FFG in San Diego. My answer was 'stunned silence'. I was curt, professional, and disheartened. No longer than three minutes later I received a call from another Flag officer who was a good, trusted friend. He started with 'I heard you're not excited by your orders'... and after I said 'sort of,' he said 'You are going to command. It's your time and the ship type doesn't matter. It's what you do with it. Be the guy.'

CO8 remembered:

My Command tour was the most magical tour. I knew super peers who had miserable tours. From there I went to be a CVN Reactor Officer, and am now on a TYCOM Staff.

I think that you can learn more effectively from those who do well than from those who don't. I was lucky to have had mostly excellent role models. A few were not-so-great, and I learned what not to do, and tried to prepare myself to avoid their demonstrated failures. The SWO preparation from the schoolhouse is good, but not great. The Command Leadership course was effective with helping us recall our bag of 'leadership nuggets.' The most effective part of this training was the time spent with fellow PCOs and the former COs. 'Learn from them, talk to them, test ideas with them.'

### **Command Experience(s)/ Challenges**

CO8 commanded an FFG combatant between 2008 and 2010. "My command tour was the most magical tour—great."

#### **Challenges**

CO8 noted:

The level of challenge was interesting. I was surprised by how many 'gray' decisions would come up to me as the CO. Luckily, I was not afraid to ask advice

from my Commodore. I grew to like the autonomy we had when not smothered. As a group, I knew that a CPO could be the CO's best friend (as well as my worst enemy). By the time I left, my Command Senior Chief had made me an Honorary CPO.

CO8 confessed:

I failed to appreciate the gravity of Captain's Mast. I didn't have a lot of experience in this institutional process since most of my assignment sand ships were with crews that were disciplined and well behaved. I had not banked a lot of observations of how to execute MAST. So as with many Command first's, followed the script and when had to deviate, made it up as we went along.

He continued:

Getting the right people to ship was harder than I thought it should have been. We were not manned to where we should be to do the job expected of us—manning reductions have hurt combat readiness. The quality of today's Sailor is different and better. Most of their world views have been shaped by the events of 9/11 and thereafter. Their approach to life allows them to stay motivated, and makes it easier to get through tough times.

He mused:

The OPTEMPO (Operational tempo) is hard. As CO, I was able to get to command- work them up for a 4 1/2 month deployment, and singularly focus because we knew what would happen. I can't imagine how much harder it is now since we have to 'crunch' for 9 months. The drawdowns in Iraq and Afghanistan are not equating to any drop in Navy requirements.

And somehow along the way, we have become a Zero Tolerance Navy—there is no room for error. COs are being relieved for some things they have no control over. Some COs were changed out for failing inspections when they had neither the materiel nor personnel support to fix shortcomings that the COs themselves had identified months previously. The funding and detailing then took place following those fiascos to make the ship ready for deployment.

## **Practices**

CO8 said:

I made sure I was involved in what was going on. I was not afraid to ask my Wardroom and CPO mess how I was doing. I walked around every day and listened closely to feedback from my ISIC. I noticed how much and how often my commodore questioned my decisions or expressed the need to get a better handle on our progress.

He relayed:

As an FFG CO, I knew our mission was to prepare the crew to serve on other ships. So I redefined our focus so we could maximize each crewmember's contribution to the future Navy.

He discussed the Chiefs:

The previous CO did not have a good relationship with the SEA (Senior Enlisted Advisor). That interaction, with the XO and SEA, is vital for opening and maintaining communications throughout the ship. My SEA and I developed a phenomenal relationship.

He knew himself:

I was never angry- and tried not to stay mad for more than a minute. ... and always sought the people who had received the full face shot of my temper to ensure they knew it was the act, not the person, that I was mad at.

He discussed A team practices:

I had been on ships that employed the 'A Team' concept for the Bridge team and other key watchstanders. Only certain, experienced and trusted officers were allowed to stand the DECK or have the CONN when entering or leaving port or going alongside. In the current 'No mistakes' environment, COs do feel more comfortable with that set up so they can answer 'had my best people on that.' I worked on training my officers so they could assume a role as a nucleus of the "A team." As more became confident I tried to balance the load.

### **Accomplishments/ Disappointments**

"We were successful and had a great CARAT deployment. We won the Battle  
E."

He described:

I learned to employ Captain's Mast as a performance excellence shaping tool. I had a lot more UCMJ cases than expected; but that's because I didn't have many prior experiences, even as XO. I applied a deep, personal attention to every case. I knew my decision would affect the person and his family and send a message to the crew. I thought through my decisions to ensure they were consistent with what I thought we stood for. That didn't mean I made up my mind beforehand. We kept Captain's Mast formal, but pushed for a frank and open discussion to get the truth. 'What were you thinking?' was often one of my questions. After every

session- and there weren't a lot, I would track the Sailor down and ask 'Fair?' and hold out my hand. Every one of them acknowledged 'Fair' as they took my hand.

He related:

One disappointment that turned into an achievement began when we discovered a relatively new fireman had gotten a DUI. He was underage as well, so he had violated two of my Rules to *Live By*: Don't drink and Drive, and if you're underage, Don't Drink. My SEA knew that the Sailor's father had been a Navy master chief, and called him up. The next thing I knew, the Master Chief was asking for me to call him. I did, and told him I would be fair; but reminded him that his son had violated two of my biggest policies. The Dad told me to do what I thought was best.... So I hammered the Sailor. But instead of going into a rebellious funk, the Sailor started performing well. About seven months later, he was involved in a heroic action and I awarded him a medal. What a feeling you get when you see a person turn-around on tour watch! Now not everyone was as thrilled. A crusty old E6 asked me how I could give 'a *dirtbag*' a medal. I said: 'Easy, he's not a *dirtbag* anymore.'

He worried:

In the last few years I think we have become a Zero tolerance service. If one's not competent and confident in what he's doing, there are too many 'Big Brothers' watching.... don't step outside the box... Any mistake in command—'little m or BIG M'—could cost you your job. Therefore, our risk/reward decision processes tend to arrive at very conservative COAs. Moreover, in this climate, innovation is not rewarded. 'How dare you think that there's a better way or that the policy is misguided.'

### **Sample Artifacts and Handouts**

CO8's working notes for the interview included these statements:

Successful commands are good places to work. Rewarding, fun, empowering... and the CO set the tone; drove priorities; he was very well respected. The Navy is a meritocracy-hard work and the application of training, education, and experience carry the day. My XO tour where I was in charge really prepared me for command. We have great sailors who are patriotic volunteers that want to succeed and must be led.

CO8 provided his basics and rules. Successful commands are good places to work; rewarding, fun, empowering. The CO sets the tone, drives priorities, respected up and down. Among CO10's Rules to Live By were:

1. Tell the truth
2. Do the right thing; Do things right.
3. Be positive Stay Positive
4. Have Fun
5. Communicate expectations.
6. Builds relationships
7. Be the standards setter
8. Be brilliant on the Basics
9. Always, teach, always learn
10. Take time for yourself
11. People quit people before they quit organizations
- ...
26. Don't Drink and Drive.

He also provided lessons on subjects including humility, respect, and excellence.

### **Advice for Those Who Would Follow the Path to Command**

CO8 offered this guidance:

To the Department Heads:

It's working; this job is hard; look ahead; help the ship be the best; make your bosses boss look good. It's now you. Be absolutely committed and learn to be an XO and the CO. Build the tool bag; get sea time, bridge time, and TAO experience. Ask COs 'why?' Be yourself- never be afraid to ask for help.

To the XOs:

Be the XO- do not be the PCO. XO does things that CO doesn't- Number 1 is XO messing and berthing. Be the strong XO and support the CO.

To the COs:

Be yourself and strive to be fair and consistent with all. Make yourself better, make the ship better every day, smile. Remind Department Heads that it's cool to be the Captain.

### **Drawings of Relative Challenges, Experience, and Performance**

CO8's drawings indicated the expansion of challenges due to the specific directions for programs. He provided these keys in response to the drawings:

- Never shoot the messenger.

- Stay calm- control- smile often.
- Show CO having fun- CO must be the biggest cheerleader.

Since he had relieved a CO who had not been too popular, CO8's graph of ship performance over time showed his ship had a prompt jump after he got settled; and continued improving throughout his tour.

### **Summary of Analyses**

In reviewing CO8's responses, several themes emerged to augment the preselected categories. Importance of COs, Effect of trusted mentors, Level of CO's Responsibilities, Bosses and Zero Tolerance Gravity of Captain's Mast. Continued theme of great leaders and downstream effects:

CO8 demonstrated the *Execution* behavior "*Insist on realism*" (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 57). CO8 exemplified the naval officer's quality of "*justice*" (Bogle & Holwitt, 2004, p. 18). CO8 represented the best facets of Covenant/Transactional/Charismatic. CO8 demonstrated the "H" component of the RICH model.

CO8's title derived from his emphasis on working for and with great people. Not all went as he had imagined and required the intervention of a Mentor. Thus he became the Mentee.

## **CO9. The Voyager**

CO9 commanded an FFG from April 2009 to October 2010.

### **Personal Background/ Motivation**

CO9 reported his ambition for command developed slowly:

I did not think about being a Commanding Officer until it came time for me to screen for XO. And then, I did not think about it until I did not screen for Command on my first look or and then I did not screen on my second look. Then I was 'Hell bent' to screen for Command on my third look.

I was in my Department Head tour watching XO screening results before I thought about it. But it's an interesting story how I got there at all. I got into the Navy 'on a lark.' Back in high school, my buddy and I were going to the local Burger King for lunch; but we didn't want to get in trouble if we got back late. So he said we could stop by the Counselor's office and she would give us a Hall Pass. She asked my friend what he wanted to do about college and he told her he wanted to go to Annapolis and serve in the Navy. When she turned to me, I said I wanted to go to the Naval Academy, too (even though I had never heard of it). Now once you mention 'military' to the counselors, your name goes into the recruiters' data bank, and I joined as an ET (Electronic Technician). I was selected for an officer program through BOOST (Broadened Opportunity for Officer Selection and Training, a program intended to help junior Sailors become officers) and won a 4 year NROTC scholarship to a State university near where I grew up.

### **Path to Command / Preparation/ JO Experiences/ Key People / Events**

CO9 had an interesting SWO path:

After SWOS DOC, I was on a 36 year old Ammunition Ship (AE) for over three years as a DIVO; and then, a cruiser as the Navigator where we became the first ship with the Voyage Management System (VMS). We did all the system interface testing and VMS acceptance work. I studied for a Master's Degree and went to SWOS Department Head School, and to an FFG as Combat Systems Officer. Then continued my career onto a Staff (DESRON) as the Staff Combat Systems and Force Protection Officer, and followed that with a job at the new NETWARCOM (Navy Network Warfare Command). I was then selected for XO on a FFG, and followed that with an assignment to the Pentagon. After not screening for command on my first two looks, I did an Individual Augmentee (IA) tour to raise my chances for command, and screened for command on third look while I was in Iraq. ... I really didn't face any barriers and basically followed the SWO path to command. The IA tour worked as advertised.

## **Command Experience(s)/ Challenges**

CO9 commanded an FFG between 2008 and 2010.

### **Challenges**

CO9 noted:

I found the SWOS pipeline using the various schools was OK, PCO/PXO schools served as a refresher. But you are definitely not prepared for some of the things that happen in command. In one of my first UNREPs, we lost propulsion alongside an oiler with lines across. Nothing could have prepared me for that except to follow my nature to stay calm, tell the Oiler's Master what was happening, and wait for reports. And, there was no one there to tell me 'It's OK.' We had a PCC casualty and slowed to nine knots. The oiler slowed enough to stay even, we got all lines clear and we pulled away. We eventually restored the PCC by reseating the cards in the console. But we weren't finished with excitement for that day. In the very next UNREP, up ahead was a sailboat that had the right of way over most ships. We performed a 'Corpen N' (a simultaneous turn while attached and alongside to another ship) to miss by about 30 yards from our bow. I do not know how the oiler missed the sailboat as well.

My early COs had different tours:

I thought my early COs had been allowed to command more than we were. There was no email. You could only get outside information from snail mail, message traffic, or the radio. Now, even when the ISIC is off the ship, there is a lot more tasking from many directions—ISIC, TYCOM, CLASSRON, etc. The bosses are micromanaging everything: checking your programs, training, Drug and Alcohol Program Advisor, and constantly harping. No day went by without several emails from the staff tasking us for data that had to be reported immediately. I finally told my wardroom that no email from outside the ship could be answered without a four-hour delay to try to slow the pace.

My tour was timed well:

I took over just after a post-deployment maintenance availability, and a 4-hour sea trial. By that time, the ship had failed two LOEs (Light Off Examinations) so I got to start at the beginning the training cycle with nowhere to go but up. We deployed on time.

Planning for success:

We were scheduled for an INSURV three months following our deployment, and I was 'Hell-bent' on a 30 day leave period per the guidance. .... My Commodore wondered if I worried about crew morale too much since I always allowed the

crew to have some time off. Since I knew what to expect, we had begun preparations at the beginning of the deployment. We were getting ready all through the deployment and maintained a steady strain. We worked on niceties in last few weeks. INSURV pronounced us 'Fit for Further Service.'

### **Practices**

CO9 said:

I focused on setting goals and getting the crew learning and working to improve our operational readiness. I learned to get around the ship often. I talked to the crew and listened as I roved through the ship. I gauged crew morale by how they talked to each other. I had been a Department Head on a ship in the Med when *Cole* got hit, so I understood the need to focus on force protection and taking care of Sailors and their families.

CO9 knew himself: "I was not always pretty":

I yelled more than I thought—but I never stayed mad. I usually spoke and got over it. I generally cared. The job can be extremely frustrating. I focused on breaking big tasks into smaller jobs to make them manageable.

### **Accomplishments/ Disappointments**

CO9 assessed:

I thought we performed above standards.. I survived the oiler incident, met every commitment, and did well on INSURV. As the Navy began to focus on failures, rather than success, I could feel the changes in expectations. Connectivity and instantaneous email and I-phones made it easier to reveal the stupid things sailors do when deployed.

Effects of Connectivity:

Ombudsmen have become nearly obsolete. A Sailor can communicate daily with his wife or girlfriend. Not many AMCROSS messages, but the word on a tragedy or a positive happening like a birth would come directly to sailor, skipping many of the chain of command. What do we just learn to live with? How much can we expect or accept?

New mandatory Command Climate Surveys:

I found the 'Command Climate Surveys,' which can be very effective, often reflected past problems, so a CO must narrow the questions to target the period when he was there. A Department Head and the XO have a lot of bearing on the crew and if the CO is 'favored.' Some problems or failures are not really just the

CO's fault; it could be a bad Department Head asserting the wrong attitude or influence.

Living my philosophy, how self-efficacy grew:

My comfort level grew as crew performed well. I didn't have sit up on the bridge for every evolution. I felt I had trained them well and by trusting the OODs, they had no problems calling me. They were able to gauge what they would/ wouldn't be allowed to do. My confidence grew as they performed. I really focused on trusting and treating people with respect. No bullying people. You can give people orders and they'll work all day long as long as they were treated with respect and understood 'the why.' I was firm, but was not about belittling or threatening people. I fired a CPO who didn't listen.

### **Sample Artifacts and Handouts**

CO9 provided his Command Philosophy.

This philosophy is intended to give you the guidelines by which I expect this crew (officers and enlisted) to operate on a daily basis. Battle Orders, Night Orders, Restricted Maneuvering Doctrines, etc. will be provided to give you specific guidance on desired actions based on unique situations and will not be addressed.

Our daily focus must be on learning and improving the operational readiness of this command. From repair efforts, to PMS, to training, everything we do impacts it. Equipment, personnel, and tactical readiness changes on a daily basis, it is up to us to know when and why. Whether it is maintaining our SORTS in order for our superiors to know our capabilities and limitations, to changing the belts on a fan coil unit to keep berthing cool so the crew can sleep restfully, everything impacts readiness. Everyone must do their part to maximize our readiness, writing the messages and changing the belts, as minor as they sound, can easily affect them.

Readiness is also impacted by how we treat our most important resource: Personnel. Rank may have its privileges, but it does not make you privileged. Leaders do not lead by being the loudest, or the smartest. They do so by being able to provide the focus of many people onto a common goal. Threats, intimidation and belittling of individuals or groups will not foster the atmosphere required to meet maximum readiness and will not be tolerated.

We will not go home at night having gotten all the work done. By applying a steady-strain approach and setting challenging (but realistic) goals for ourselves and our people we can easily get there from anywhere. By establishing the goal and highlighting the path (no matter how difficult), We will succeed far more often than having never had a goal to begin with.

The concepts contained on this page are not difficult or surprising, but they are often areas that keep good ships from being great and good leaders from being heard.

### **Advice for Those Who Would Follow the Path to Command**

CO9 offered the following guidance for those aspiring to Command.

To Department Heads:

Ask yourself: Do you want to go to command? All of them said I was first they saw who made being in command look fun! Command 's not a burden—if you aspire. There is no ‘on/off’ switch on who you are. Listen/ communicate. The ‘in command’ persona needs to be yours. Be honest with yourself about who you are. Nothing changed overnight. In most dealings with the CO, you know what the answer's going to be 90% of the time. The crew appreciates that—work on consistency. There is lots of info to share as you are leaving, make sure you do it.

To those XO s with separate tours:

Make the POD work. Plan of the Day, not ‘Possibilities of the Day’. Be consistent. Be yourself. The crew ought to know about 80% of what is going to happen. Treat them as adults and expect them to know. Put the responsibility on them to do what they know what needs to be done.

To those in the fleetup from XO to CO:

Be same person. Crew can perform amazingly when they know they have that authority. Remember only one CO on the ship. Be the XO—the ship needs one. You are not the CO in waiting. Prove you have earned command pin from your performance as XO. You are the XO who does Heads and Beds. You’re the guy....For all admin read every single line; make sure it’s spell checked. Learn how to do admin for all the programs, especially training and maintenance. Send it back more than a dozen times when needed. If its inside the lifelines, know what CO wants, own it. Know what your limits are, know what your job is. Maintain your wits.... Execute the policy as though it were yours, since it soon shall be.

To COs:

Be who you are. Don't expect to be liked immediately as CO if you weren't as XO. Make sure you figure out how to find time to decompress. As XO/ CO, know how much your spouse wants to be involved...Do not force them and be careful about Family communications. Hopefully, no CO or XO or CMC spouse will hit reply all with ‘What a bitch.’

## **Drawings of Relative Challenges, Experience, and Performance**

CO9 drew the difference in challenges as different baskets: One held apples, the other oranges. The baskets were the same size and shape; but so different. For the similar challenges, today's COs have different assets to deal with them. He again noted that his "old COs didn't get as much guidance. The concept of 'reach back' helped; but 'micromanaging' doesn't."

His ship did ROH- Workups- deployment- Indy deployer- SPMG- BALTOPS. He had a "bunch of new ensigns come aboard in Basic phase. NATO ops, really gave them great starts" and we excelled in Counter-piracy ops and getting ready for INSURV.

## **Summary of Analyses**

CO9 represented a new breed of COs who were not driven to command from their first days in the Navy, but the concept of being in Command matured as the officers realize what an opportunity exists to serve. CO9's responses revealed new themes. CO's authority has reduced: Being considerate of your people. CO9 infused personal self-knowledge:

Ask yourself: Do you want to go to command? All of them said I was first they saw who made being in command look fun! Command 's not a burden, if you aspire. Be honest with who you are—there is no 'on/off' switch on who you are. Listen/ communicate. The 'in command' persona needs to be yours.

Be who you are. Don't expect to be liked immediately as CO if you weren't as XO.

Due to CO9's calm demeanor, the absence of showing a 'flustered and how are we ever going to get it done' look, made some bosses uneasy. Evidently, they need to see the COs sweat. Previous COs seem to have had less inference from seniors. A steady strain, as the best books recommend for long-term projects, works best. You can actually avoid

most of the stresses. Fewer stressors lead to lower discipline and performance problems, which leads to greater achievement and quality performance across the crew.

CO9 demonstrated the *Execution* behavior “*Know your people and the business*” (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 57). CO9 exemplified the naval officer’s quality of “*courtesy*” (Bogle & Holwitt, 2004, p. 18). CO9 exemplified Servant model of leadership. CO9 demonstrated the “I” (emotional Intelligence) component of the RICH model.

He never appeared rattled or allowed the Commodore to get under his skin. As the *Voyager*, CO9 was along for the ride as far as it would take him. He learned both technical and tactical details and appreciated the officers and sailors who worked with him. He still has miles to go in his service to the Navy and the Nation.

## **CO10. The Adventurer**

CO10 commanded an FFG August 2004 to May 2006.

### **Personal Background/ Motivation**

CO10's described his wanting to be a CO had no specific "aha moment:"

But on my first ship as a DIVO as I was leaving after over two years, I remembered liking to drive the ship, and gaining great respect for the CO and XO. ... wanting to be like them. I set becoming an XO, then a CO as a professional goal. It represents the culmination of experience in the Navy; and once I set that goal, I then proceeded to make the most of my time in the Navy.

### **Path to Command / Preparation/ JO Experiences/ Key People / Events**

CO10's path to command was typical for a SWO, alternating between ships at sea and shore duty where he gained valuable insights:

I was on a destroyer DD first, and led three different Divisions: Fire Control, Auxiliary Officer (AUXO), and Strike. I then served ashore as the Flag aide to the Commander of the Operational Test and Development Force (COTF) and realized that these guys (admirals) are real people too. That experience gave me confidence in dealing with future seniors.

He continued:

I then went to SWOS Department Head School arriving earlier than many of my classmates. From there, I was assigned as a Department Head on a new DDG. I was the Ship's Weapons Officer (SWO), and scheduled to become its Combat Systems Officer (CSO) in a few years. We made two Deployments. I did the first one as SWO, and the second one as CSO. I served under three COs. On that ship, I qualified as TAO, and was exposed to each CO from Combat and through standing watch on the bridge during Sea Details. My next assignment was to the Surface Warfare Development Group (SWDG) as the director of Air Warfare tactics, the DDG's specialty. SWDG very instructive as we continued to learn and develop new tactics. I conducted and observed many missile exercises and built my AAW experience, and felt I could really fight the ship, from a single ship perspective. The sea tours seem 'self-evident' to prepare me for Command.

He remembered:

Thinking as a Department Head, 'the XO does not look like he's having fun'... maybe I should try to skip that experience and go straight to command. I do think

there is no way to be a good XO without being a Department Head.... and no way to be a good CO without being a good XO.

He recalled:

From SWDG, I went to the Ballistic Missile Defense Office (BMDO) in DC. That's not a CO development tour per se but I checked the DC/ Joint boxes- to screen for command. Fighting the beltway budget battles was not necessarily adding to my CO tool bag.

From there my reprieve came when I was assigned to be an XO on a DDG. It was my most formative tour and once there, I relished being second in Command. It gave me the chance to second guess, test and learn. It was 'safe' since if I guessed wrong, it was not just my problem. The CO relied on me for almost every seamanship or shiphandling evolution. I never really held a critique on the CO, but I did have the 'aha moment when I was ready' for command.' After an UNREP where it took longer than it should have to get lined up and then finish. I felt I could have done it better than the CO managed to do it. I was ready!

From my XO ride, I went to be the Chief Staff Officer (CSO) for the DESRON (who became Admiral, the recent Chief at BUPERS, and now is the VCNO). The XO tour served to be instructive and developmental in running a ship. From the DESRON CSO position and working for guy who had command, I learned how a typical Commodore and his staff looked at things. I closely observed seven COs. Using those experiences... seeing all the COs, and dealing with all the XOs, refined my sense of thinking about how the ship looks from the outside, and that is huge! I noted everything the commodores said after they came back from a visit to a ship on waterfront. I learned the 'pulse points' and knew what to focus on when I got to command to 'keep bosses happy.'

I then went to JPME at the Naval War College and was assigned to command of an FFG.

### **Command Experience(s)/ Challenges**

CO10 commanded an FFG from August 2004 to May 2006.

I was well prepared, and every step on the SWO path to command made me able to become a better CO. There is no substitute for experience. Waterfront time—both on ships and on staffs—is important for your development. My ship tours and our Navy schools aided my preparation. SWOS, especially the PCO and PXO courses, updated and refreshed our knowledge of expectations on the waterfront. We were exposed to changes since our last time at sea; and although we have

many programs, they are not static. I gained a buoyed sense of confidence to hit the decks running.

## **Challenges**

CO10 confessed:

The challenge of command was more than I had expected. All my prior sea tours had been on DDG's or DD's. I had to learn a new ship and understand the FFG mindset. It only had a single screw main propulsion plant, with APUs (Auxiliary Power Units) to aid close-in maneuvering near the pier. I spent a lot of time just finding my way around the ship.

He was:

Surprised by the 'Frigate Navy mentality.' The ships and missions are not as glamorous, especially after the missile launcher got downgraded, and some long-term frigate Sailors had allowed some things to slip. It was like an 'inferiority complex' and most thought they didn't have to maintain same standards. I thought that was 'CRAP' the standard is the standard- and I had to break that mindset.

He noted:

What became my biggest challenge was that all through the pipeline, I was told I was lucky to be going to a 'Great ship, with a great reputation'—and was very surprised to discover what I surmised were sad standards and practices. Although the crew retained a positive expectation of success, I could see that not enough hard work was being done to prevent a major incident.

The culture challenge:

The crew had adopted a 'Survive the inspection 'mindset' and concentrated on showmanship vice professionalism. The day-to-day practices were not there. It was like a bad onion. Everything that appeared to be squared away during the days of inspection, when revisited a few weeks later, all I found was a lot of brown and gooey junk on the inside.

The way out:

We had to drive back to basics and excellence. There was not a lot of time to fix it before deployment. During workups, I clarified standards and the crew listened and responded. It was tough for six months, ramping up to the level of performance I would expect. It seemed that my previous COs had luxury of Cold War focus. They never faced 'optimal— e.g., REDUCED- manning.' They

benefited from 'single focus' on the Big Bad Bear. We now had an amorphous enemy and were gaining prowess in MIO and counter-piracy operations.

## **Practices**

A CO's work:

As CO, a significant part to a successful tour is managing 'outside the lifelines.' But I focused first on cleaning up the goo. I did lot of walking around and continually discussing a mission-focus and making sure all hands understood my expectations: 'What was right 'was the way it was going to be.

He noted:

3-M practices had to be enforced. Readiness needed to be more than new paperwork and paint.

He tried to observe:

In thinking about key pulse points or how to assure myself things were going well, we originally used the Division in the Spotlight ('DITS') concept, but some things, Safety, 3M, Career Counseling, warrant a shipwide look. So I developed the 'Program in the Spotlight' (PITS). We took a program a week, looked through all Divisions and the ship, and came back in six months. As we executed PMS spot checks, I also decoupled zone inspection from DITS. They were 'Random- short notice' to prevent the 'pain exs' that had preceded past Zone Inspections... The XO, CMC and I were around and through the ship often to see what the spaces looked like. I picked my zone out of hat.

CO10 noted:

I found the 'Women at sea' program was not an issue, nor was the imposition of DADT....I liked to go out on the 'Smoke deck' and have a cigar all the while I listened to conversations. On the first occasion, they were very tense. But I did it often enough to have them relax. I found that if you ask a sailor a question, they will answer.....I worked to get into their mind, all the way into the 'trust center.' We used everything we could such as posting lists on bulletin boards of who was doing well. I had a good CMC....I knew to keep my DESRON fully informed since I had been a DESRON CSO. That way, he didn't call much.... and when he did, he wanted updates. I never felt micromanaged.

## **Accomplishments/ Disappointments**

CO10 said:

I 'took over' 6 months before deployment in the intermediate / advanced phase of the FRTP. We got some checks done, but actual day-to-day practices were not up to par. You have to go through workups. We knew we were going to Fifth Fleet. We were trading some warfighting prowess for maritime interdiction experience.

CO10 discussed funding:

As budgets went down, our ships lost some capability, for sure, capacity. I had watched the crew size dwindle during my command tour. With some of the burden shifted to ship's force, there were not enough man-hours to do what was needed. Sailors can only do so much. We need to understand the capability vs. capacity issues. From over 220 on our first deployment, we were well under 185 on our second deployment, and other frigates had drifted down below 150.

CO10 discussed managing:

Many people working out of rate. STs were assigned to the Gatling guns, losing time on Sonar stacks. ASW proficiency erodes without constant use; and I knew/ worried that it would take a while to come back.

CO10 said he missed "Optimal manning:"

I dodged that bullet ... It was a budget driven decision to lower surface ship maintenance costs when overall Navy funding was going down. We had to keep the subs and aircraft carriers on tack and those assets used the money and less went to ships. I saw our major maintenance availability go from \$10 Million to under \$7 Million. ... I reprioritized my list of projects and shifted money to fix INSURV items. We worked at least 17 HABALTs (Habitability Alterations) to fix structural and ventilation problems.

CO10 surmised:

The cause of the funding crises was that there was no 'revolt of the admirals' to stem the tide as those budgets were going down. Many were too worried about their future rather than about what would be happening, and eventually did happen, on Navy's ships. The ships lost their ability to assess themselves, shore support organizations were written out of existence, and schools dried up. All these combined to lower a ship's self-identification ability. Every maintenance ability closed out with 'Growth work', much of which had been previously identified but deferred. The Navy wound up paying nearly double.

## **Sample Artifacts and Handouts**

CO10 did not provide any artifacts. He discussed his philosophy:

As CO, a significant part to a successful tour is managing ‘outside the lifelines.’ But I focused first on cleaning up the goo. I did lot of walking around and continually discussing a mission-focus and making sure all hands understood my expectations: ‘What was right ‘was the way it was going to be.

## **Advice for Those Who Would Follow the Path to Command**

CO10 provided this direction for those coming to Command:

To Department Heads:

Even though you may think otherwise, you need an XO tour to be ready for command. Your Department Head tour will be very broadening, and necessary step in your path to command. As XO I was surprised how much time I spent on Department Head issues, rather than working only Command-wide issues. As Department Heads, learn to think about the whole ship and what you can do to make it work. Be involved in command-wide events. My DESRON staff tour proved to be an excellent building block.

To XOs:

You are the XO; not the PCO. There is only one CO, and that CO is not about them. Learn as much from the COs as you possibly can. Think about how you might do it when you have the star. Make absolutely sure that you emerge from closed door sessions with the CO that you are XO in establishing and carrying out the CO’s policy—XO has more daily impact on a Sailor’s life.

To the COs:

As CO, remember, command is a responsibility—not a reward. CO is not about you. Make sure your CMC works the chiefs. A recent trend has caught CPOs who just sit in the mess. They have not ‘made it.’ There is no time to kick back. You have a responsibility to care for the whole crew, as well as the Navy. Never take your foot off the gas. And don't let your ego get caught up in command. Think ‘Ship-crew-mission.’ Don't get a big head—not all your peers will make it here.

## **Drawings of Relative Challenges, Experience, and Performance**

CO10 thought the CO job has more challenges now, up and down based on schedule/ happenings. He graphed the Warfighting challenge greater then; but "people/programs" and running the ship greater now.

His early COs had funding for more steaming days and their enlisted personal went through enroute to their ships. Those COs had been presented Sailors prepared to excel at sea. He found that Crew services were OK, as well as Combat Systems and Supply personnel.

When he graphed Performance vs. time, he showed his ship improved to good all-around performance on deployment; then during the SRA dropped off, but not as low. He noted the level of effort he expended dropped. He had two major influx /out flux of people. Once before the deployment; and again there was another large gain and personnel loss after deployment. The Ratings most undermanned were GSEs, GSMs, FC, QM/SM. He did have a Plethora of ENS due to the cancellation of SWOS DOC.

## **Summary of Analyses**

In reviewing CO10's responses, Early Initiative: CO10 stressed the importance of the XO tour in building the portfolio for success as a CO. Crew Mindset and Ship's Culture: Manning:

CO10 demonstrated the *Execution* behavior "*Set clear goals and priorities*" (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 57). CO10 exemplified the naval officer's quality of "*firmness*" (Bogle & Holwitt, 2004, p. 18). CO10 demonstrated the "C" (confidence) component of the RICH model.

CO10 earned the title “The Adventurer” since he had served on different ship types and was sent to non-traditional shore tours. First as the aide to the Admiral in charge of the Operational Test and Development force and as the Navy representative to the Ballistic Missile Defense Office (BMDO) in Washington, DC. He also served as the CSO for a DESRON following his XO tour. An unspoken fact is that the CSO position is normally filled by the XO who proves to be the best on working the waterfront. CO10 also took great pride in his seamanship and ship driving achievements.

## **CO11. The Facilitator**

CO11 commanded three times. He commissioned into service and commanded an MHC October 1997 to August 1999, an LSD from February 2002 to October 2003 participating in OIF, and an LHD from September 2008 to February 2010, deploying to the Middle East and supporting the relief effort in Haiti less than six weeks following their return.

### **Personal Background/ Motivation**

CO11 grew up as an Army brat and went through college on a ROTC scholarship. He began his Navy career after SWOS DOC on a DD, qualifying as a Surface Warfare Officer and then served ashore in Newport, RI. Following SWOS Department Head School, he was an Operations officer for a DD. His inspiration:

I had worked for some COs who had command early in their careers. In my second Department Head tour, the 'lights came on.' And I understood why being a DIVO and then going to shore tours before being a Department Head were important.

### **Path to Command / Preparation/ JO Experiences/ Key People / Events**

CO11 had sea tours, a shore tour in Newport, and was a destroyer Department Head. He transferred to a DESRON staff:

I thought I could command as a second tour Department Head while in my OPS job on a DESRON staff. I worked for Commodores who later became Admirals. Most of my mentors had early command, and I wanted to follow in their wake. I figured I could start small and grow into more challenging jobs. So I sent a letter to the Bureau and was selected for LCDR command when I was on the staff at Commander Second Fleet. I was assigned as the Commissioning OIC (Officer in Charge) and first CO of a new MHC—a coastal mine hunter.

At the MHC:

When I arrived at the MHC I learned quickly and, was reminded throughout that tour, there was no sitting in back of the chariot. I even recalled thinking that the

COs on my DD's seemed to have been aloof. Once in command, we all realize that's not the case. On small ships, you find out what you really need to – or didn't – know.

And then:

Following the MHC, I served as a PCO instructor at SWOS. Then, although I had no AMPHIB experience, I was slated to an LSD. I was nearly through the pipeline heading to ship A, when I took command on short notice of ship B. The Previous CO 'quit' – told his XO he couldn't take it on a Tuesday afternoon. I was called in to meet with the Flag on Thursday at 0800, and at 0930, I walked up the brow to take command.

### **Command Experience(s)/ Challenges**

CO11's early command experience "mirrored what seniors had described to me."

He continued:

They had PHMs or MSOs who, when they received a set of orders, were expected to shove off and execute, and report back when finished for their next assignment. The MHC I had was slower and simpler. I used my peers as confidants and benchmarks. We developed a lot of solutions through our 'chit chatting' among ourselves on the waterfront. By the time we were at Corpus, we had a unique 'waterfront 'COs protection society.'

He noted:

On the MHC, I felt well prepared going in. 'You don't know what you don't know.' The support above me as an O4 in the Mine Force was not really there in Pre-Comm. But we were following the same paths as the new DDG's in pre-comm, so I learned from those DDG COs some good things to instill in my MHC command. We also developed a lead-follow pass down system among those of us going to MHCs. If we followed Navy Regs and did what's right, we would succeed. As an O-5, I had great support from above (in more ways than one).

He recalled:

As I arrived to take Command of the LSD, I was prepared to continue doing it all—like I had done on the MHC- on the LSD. However, I discovered that the XO, Department Heads, and Division Officers were ready to take responsibility and use their authorities. They were all more mature, motivated, and experienced. I really had no barriers on path, my LCDR Command served as my XO equivalent tour. I skipped XO (but now as XO of major shore training facility, I wish I had been an XO). I know myself well, and Admin is not my strong suite. I was not

sure about executing a full-blown plan. I am confident and able to do a lot with a little bit. I can take a blank sheet and an assignment and run with it.

He described his experience:

When I relieved in O-5 command, the ship had struggled with materiel repairs, and missed a scheduled deployment. They were supposed to have been at the end of Basic certifications, but progress was going slow while they were fighting materiel failures that were truly beyond ship's force's ability to fix. They needed to fully discover and fully document their status, and we required the help from a shipyard to overhaul the main engines. We began Basic thinking we'd deploy to UNITAS, and then became part of Iraqi Freedom. But we were not loaded as an ARG-MEU; we transported 2<sup>nd</sup> MEB's tanks and their HQ Company, and certified enroute the Arabian Gulf as a member of ATF East. We did an 'Admin offload in Kuwait' and then split off to accomplish missions as assigned by CTF 53. We took an LCAC and served as a Logistics carrier, and shuttled back and forth from Bahrain.

He remembered:

As a Captain in major command on the LHD, I took over at the beginning of the integrated phase, worked up and deployed in June, returning in December. We sailed off a week after New Year's to support UNIFIED RESPONSE, and I held my Change of Command off the coast of Haiti.

### **Challenges**

We were all junior on the MHC:

On the MHC, we all were junior. The XO had been the most junior department head on his first tour, and the only Department Head School graduate was the Engineer. The JO's were fresh out of the Naval Academy. We had two Chiefs, one of whom I had served with previously on a DD when I was a Department Head.

The impact of AT/FP:

Following *Cole* and 9/11, we changed our Force Protection practices across the Navy. It was one of the topics I had been teaching at SWOS. Many new security measures were implemented and more folks had to qualify on weapons. Those things though did not impact negatively on how we went about our business on ships. It just shifted the focus; now these are 'facts of life.'

COs' conduct:

Expectations for exemplary conduct of COs are no different. But I would say three factors have changed, so it seems to have more emphasis. The speed of information—with Facebook comms and the like, what we used to be able to control/ keep within the lifelines, has become public. This extra visibility and the media have affected the 'speed with which unknowing public expects us to 'do something.' And there is a cultural difference. The current generation is savvy and expects to have access to a greater amount of information. We need to provide that. They are used to sharing and have not been exposed to many boundaries.

Transparency demands extra accountability:

Today, more officers are being held accountable for behavior that has 'always' gone on—word gets out—more aware and can do more about things that shouldn't be. We just didn't have the means to adjudicate some of it. We have always had divergence in command climates of ships with good leaders and poor leaders. I recall that a command climate in my DD was great, but two ships over, it was horrible. In another homeport, there were six great ships I would have loved to have served in; and six ships that I thought 'not on my life.'

### **Practices**

CO11 noted:

It seems I was late to recognize that I would have to build a 'sixth sense' of command in the MHC. Was the crew behaving properly? How much crew time did we spend taking care of family business? I spent hours just listening to families. In small crews, it is especially important. Do their husbands want to come to work? We loaded our schedule and put the onus on ourselves. Because of the atmosphere of trust, I was able to tackle several morale issues. After any incident, I wondered 'Can we still get to where we need to get to?' I enjoyed the opportunity to operate independently, and the experience served me well.

CO11 learned to focus:

On the LSD when I took over, the XO warned that we had only 120 hours—my first five days— to get ready for the Engineering Assessment. That crystallized my thoughts and I snapped into the behavior I had honed on the MHC. We fought through those materiel issues. My confidence from duty on the Staff and in school helped me make the call to convince the Commodore and powers that be that the problems we had identified and finally documented were not fixable by us.

CO11 assessed:

My staff tours helped me communicate my concerns early since I had learned that those shore organizations exist to help operating forces—not vice versa.

### **Accomplishments/ Disappointments**

CO11 noted:

There are two shapes of for the learning curve. Learning the ship from O-1 to O-5, undergoes a 'big delta.' In each assignment, have to run through 'How to command, How to communicate with the Boss, How to communicate with your people, and figure out where to sit in the wardroom.' I had previous skippers who based their control on how the room was set up for their arrival.

CO11 recalled:

Making sure I was dedicated to 'being myself' was also a key. I discovered early that copying an engineer who threw tantrums and kicked shitcans for attention was not me. But there are times when you have to work on getting your crew and the staff to listen. Qualifying on different platforms and positions helped immensely as I worked to ignite some folks' fires. Qualifying on time was a big goal across all my assignments. Know your CPO and people, listen to them.

CO11 noted:

As a Major Command CO, I was nearly the oldest, I could relate to chiefs as a peer or even a big brother. I focused on building 'usual respect' and an 'inverted organization.' I had a hard time envisioning the organization if I stood at top. I figured the weight of the org should rest on me, and each level had a piece of the action.

CO11 said:

I demanded unusual respect both up and down the chain of command. I treated the Wardroom and CPO mess together. I wanted them to be able to relate to me and allow them to be comfortable with whom I was, so they could be themselves around me. I worked to have them experience, observe, and want to emulate our best. The 'top down' view made me the bottom since ultimately I had all the responsibilities. Each layer was there to support those above them. Provide the direction and tools to lift those up. Don't expect them to read your mind. We used 'junior' and senior' vice 'above and below' to aid all being able to understand the vision. Began to teach responsibilities and authorities. Now we were not 'USS WOBEGON' where the Sailors were strong, all the spouses were good looking, and the equipment all worked all the time. Each layer had the responsibility to provide support for those above them. Lift up to provide what

people need—‘inverted pyramid.’ Anyone could ask when they weren’t sure and it was the level in the chain of command that would explain what the expectations were. Be out in front and open; avoid stifling initiative. When people are confident, they will use their initiative.

CO11 discussed:

Examine why things didn't go right. Sometimes people are doing wrong; smoke them out. Make sure there is no 'underground' terrorist. I actually had to put a guy out who was abusing his people. That's how we ran when all set up. In the MHC, I built it into crew and ship. On LSD, I had to allow them to see how it could work, and that they could trust me. On the LHD, we had loads of talent.

### **Sample Artifacts and Handouts**

CO11 offered his command philosophy, which was based on unusual respect—both up and down:

I view an ideal organization not as a mountain with the most senior leader resting at the peak, but as a top spinning on its point. In this model the weight of an organization rests on the most senior leader. As Commanding Officer, it is my honor and privilege to serve USS SHIP, her families, and the Navy in this way. Orders from higher authority provide the motion. This model places our most junior personnel at the highest level with the farthest to fall. They require and deserve the best support, example, and leadership we can provide. This model also assumes that different people or parts of the ship's organization will need extra guidance or support from time to time, and that we must adjust to recognize and meet emergent needs. As we move through the chain of command, each person at their level of leadership guides, supports and ensures recognition for their immediate subordinates in a manner that creates cooperation and balance. By balance I am not just referring to the workload. We all must strike a balance in family, social, spiritual, and work lives as they apply to each sailor in order for our team to succeed in USS SHIP's endeavors.

CO11 viewed himself as a “servant” leader:

Life for me has become less complicated having surrendered completely to the sovereignty of God. I cannot repay the price paid on the Cross for my salvation or that paid on the battlefield for my freedom, but I can honor our Lord and this nation with my service. I want my life to be one of service to God, my family, and my fellow man, always in that order.

CO11 acknowledged the shaping he received from a Chief. In the Chief's retirement ceremony, CO11 related a story that traced the paths of two people who would eventually meet on a Navy ship:

In October 1972, a young man from Vidalia, Georgia was wondering how he was going to survive the night at Great Lakes Recruit Training Center under the tyranny of a company commander. A time zone away, a 10-year-old boy in New Jersey was wondering how he was going to survive the next day of fifth grade under the tyranny of Mrs. Cunningham. Neither knew or cared about the existence of the other, and survival until the year 1998 was for the most part a fantasy.

In 1986, that seaman recruit was a chief petty officer reporting to a DD as the ship's deck division LCPO. That fifth grader was a Lieutenant Junior Grade serving as COMMO in that same DD who had never seen a BMC as anything other than something to be feared and avoided. Each knew nothing of the other's past, but both knew that there were things to be taught and learned, and that for better or worse they were now shipmates, a relationship that neither took lightly.

By now I am sure none of you had to call a rocket scientist to figure out who's who in this little story. Master Chief BOSUN Chief is someone I am proud to call shipmate and I am one of the hundreds of sailors who are better people because of this man. I am also a representative of the hundreds who are better leaders because of his example.

CO11 concluded:

Have no doubts about the future of our Navy. Right now, in October, there is a young Seaman Recruit up at Great Lakes Recruit Training Center wondering how he or she is going to survive night under the tyranny of a company commander. That Seaman Recruit will one day meet the fifth grader who is right now suffering under an oppressive teacher and who doesn't yet know what leadership is. Those two are our reliefs.

### **Advice for Those Who Would Follow the Path to Command**

CO11 offered the following advice for those coming in his steps.

To Department Heads:

Ask yourself, under what authorities are you operating? Do you know the limits of your authorities? How is your stewardship of the resources contributing to CO's ability to command? I learned this when as a Department Head I asked the Commodore what he wanted us to do. He clearly told me, 'it's your job to tell me

and if I don't say no, then I expect that's what we'll do. Department heads actions are taking place under the authority of the CO. How do you know what the CO is using to decide? Use XO and other Department Heads as a sounding board. Make sure XO is involved.

To a new XO:

On the fleetup policy, we need to let it stay awhile. We have to stop bailing out before we know what's going on. Allow it to establish and collect data to judge its effect. The Officers will be much closer in 'peer-hood'—better to communicate.

XO: Number 1 never forget: you are XO- not the PCO. If you arrive as 'PCO,' you are on a path to failure. Every ship needs an XO, and can stand only one CO at a time. As you get more and more confident, keep asking what am I doing to help the decider? The 'up-side' of the new policy is that the CO and XO will be much closer in age, so they may be able to communicate better. Look at Navy Regs and note that the XO does everything the CO does, and more.

To COs:

I hope we give the new CO more time to decompress between XO to CO – we all need 'soak' time between XO and CO for more than a week. Think about how you are doing it as XO and how you need to do it as CO before making the transition. In the old days, the terms were the XO wears the 'Black hat' and the CO wears the 'white hat.' That may not be a good paradigm now. People do not see you by the billet, but as who you are, what you do, and how you treat them. How are you going to deal with Department Heads that were afraid to talk to you as the XO? How are they going to trust enough to talk to you as CO? We need to invest in people being themselves and knowing themselves.

### **Drawings of Relative Challenges, Experience, and Performance**

CO11 graphed his levels of challenge vs. early COs for each of his commands.

His LCDR MHC command was more challenging than he thought his first CO faced. His Commander Command tour on the LSD was commensurate with his early COs and as Captain, he noted the challenges were not really different across warfighting, people, and behavior; but that the information age had exploded in terms of managing the messages.

## Summary of Analyses

CO11 echoed previous COs who noted COs should expect an early surprise; he changed ships at the last minute. He noted he felt well prepared going in, but “You don’t know what you don’t know.” Both the MHC and the LSD were new ship types for me. The expectations for exemplary conduct of COs are no different.

CO11 demonstrated the *Execution* behavior “*expand your people’s capabilities*” (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 57). CO11 exemplified the naval officer’s quality of “*courtesy*” (Bogle & Holwitt, 2004, p. 18). CO11 demonstrated the “H” (Hope) component of the RICH model.

CO11 exemplified the servant/ covenant leadership model. CO11 earned the title the “Facilitator” based on his collegial nature and how he described his experiences. Using his people skills and servant leadership attitude, he has succeeded at every level in a variety of assignments.

## **CO12. The Heritage**

CO12 commanded an FFG April 2008 to December 2009, doing operations off Northern Europe and a counter narcotic operations deployment in the Caribbean.

### **Personal Background/ Motivation**

CO12's father was a career Navy man and SWO who had command of an FF. She joined the Navy to get a job just after Desert Storm. Her first ship was an AFS, and she was aware of the list of women who went to noncombatant ship commands. Her first CO was not a positive example. "He probably wouldn't have survived in the new Navy."

CO12's second CO "set the hook and ..."

I began to aspire to command...and began thinking about command. Any Ensign who says they want to command on their first day is delusional, but the concept of command...grew on me. I began to consider what the Navy means as a larger effort... that said, there was no lightning bolt moment... but my timing was good because there were changes in the Navy at right time. I was part of the transition when Congress opened up more Sea Duty positions to women. Leading a department makes you really want to think about how to lead a ship.

CO12 continued:

I had joined the Navy when more opportunities were opening for women, but there were still some long held attitudes about women at sea. I served at SWOS DOC as an instructor in seamanship and navigation. I recall being told, 'You're only AFS and LSD experienced' from a SWO LT. Then, I discovered when I got my Department Head orders that 'it's only a DD, not a DDG.' I realized I would never be 'good enough' for some people. That was a gauntlet I took up and it helped me set in my mind that I'll show you!

### **Path to Command, Preparation, JO Experiences, Key People, Events**

CO12's path to command included lot of quality sea time. She was an OCS graduate, and got the last female SWO candidate billet for her fist ship. She noted:

My second CO mentor taught other stuff: leadership and management. I learned a lot about command in first DIVO tour ... One to one leadership for 35 deck seamen, checking on them prepared me for life in the spotlight on my second

ship, when I became the first woman assigned to that ship ...I also learned to never be surprised by a FITREP. On that second CHENG tour, I had one CO who wrote me bad Fitrep I had not expected. He had prided himself as being from the last non-female class at the Naval Academy. That made my path to command not exactly smooth. I had done back-to-back tours as an Engineering Department Head on a DD and CG, and I wasn't screening for XO due to the poor FITREP from the CG CO.

CO12 continued:

So after Joint Professional Military Education (JPME), I took a Navigator position on a 'Big Deck' AMPHIB to boost my selection confidence for XO and CO. The AMPHIB experience was a great tour, and I worked for my first female CO, and I screened for XO as a result--'the SWO Gods lined up behind me.' Screening boards can be who you know as well as what you did... and one of my mentors, the female CO, was on the Board. I screened on my fourth look... The CG CO who had given me poor Fitreps--even after I was CHENG, passed all CERTS and OPPEs, and had extended for the cruise--had been fired and the COs on the board knew enough to discount that aberrant report.... Then I was an XO on an FFG, and followed as the Chief of Staff for the DESRON. This was worth it!

### **Command Experience(s)/ Challenges**

CO12 commanded a FFG between 2008 and 2010 doing operations off Northern Europe and counter narcotic operations in the Caribbean. She noted:

I got to command by doing a lot of Sea Duty, and I had Service Force, AMPHB, and DD, CG, and staff experience. I was as prepared as one can be. My sea duty counter is 13 years, 6 months. There is only so much you can teach. Even some *Legal* things you learn from experience. The main thing you learn is how to handle unexpected occurrences. Being a DESRON CSO right before I took command was wonderful.

### **Challenges**

CO12 assessed:

Commanding in 2008 vs. 1991 is different--not in scope but in the nature of the challenges. The world is more connected and the differences in resources and programs have been huge. In the 90's people were like a commodity-- now we're in a fight for valuing people. We have implemented major changes in managing people programs. They have a different focus now. We have always been against drugs, sexual assault, and equality; the programs are more expansive--e.g., we didn't have a whole month devoted to any single issue, nor did we have to do

Standowns on any of them. As resources have dwindled, the OPTEMPO has increased because we have more to do with fewer ships and crews.

The new FRTP schedule presents a different inspection every week so we have to refocus every weekend. I took command in the Shipyard toward the end of ULTRA (Unit Level Training Assessment) to repair an engineering casualty. It was 'baptism by fire.' I came on board having to finish ULTRA-S and the NAVCHECK ride. On my first underway in command, the ship was doing night Boat Ops just off the coast with the PORT ROYAL incident running through my brain. We followed with workups, the COMPTUEX, and served as a Red Force unit in JTFEX.

CO12 recalled:

We were sent to do JOINT WARRIOR and followed it with BALTOPS, and were originally scheduled to visit Denmark and Norway, which was where my family heritage. When the Nordic pilot noted my name, I was treated as one of them. We were later switched to visit Poland and Sweden so I did not get to set foot back on the land of my grandfather and grandmother.

CO12 continued:

I had lost my XO just before that trip due to family issues, and never got along as well with the new one. I discovered later that he had worked against me. On the way home, we had rough seas and, in speeding to avoid an even bigger storm, took a pounding that damaged the SONAR Dome. So we underwent an Emergency Drydocking when we returned.

CO12 noted:

We then got ready for deployment and made many port visits. We deployed independently to do CNOPS in the Caribbean visiting a lot of cruise ship ports. The major accomplishment was that we had 17 port visits, and no liberty incidents.

CO12 had this to say about social media:

The other big challenge besides operating was the effects brought on by the rise of social media. We have not yet learned how to handle the speed to which we become aware and have to take action. Communications awareness training tries to explain the difference in speed and effect of letters vs. email. Many of the pictures that, in the old days, we would look at and toss out, become posted for the world to see. Most happen with unannounced timing and without context or explanations. Many things we can't handle at a low level as before; losing the 'teachable moments.' If the person posting is already judgment impaired, they're still going to hit click. We tried to remind them to be aware of OPSEC issues –

the ‘bad guys watch the net, too.’ Luckily the FFGs limited bandwidth cut down some of the pictures and movies that could have been sent. I still found out about some shenanigans through social media rather than the chain of command. It has also brought new leadership challenges; I still receive ‘friend requests’ from former Sailors.

### ***Practices***

CO12 noted:

I had to learn to deal with the effects of the ‘optimal manning’ and reduced maintenance budgets. We only had 139 people to fill our ‘key billets.’ And the post 9/11 major focus on Force Protection required us to get the whole ship to a security mindset. In training, there are some things you just can’t simulate. Every one required to handle a weapon had to experience live weapons familiarization (FAM) fires.

CO12 described:

I was a big proponent of MBWA, and would walk the ship. I especially liked doing it at night. 2200, 2300 even at 0200, it is interesting to see what the Sailors or up to. I used the CO’s suggestion box. It was rare to answer right away. I wanted time to think about the right answer and try to discover more about the context. I posted most answers through a common forum.

I did many of my walk arounds with other leaders, and the CMC/ XO and I learned that we needed to talk often. In hindsight, we agreed that we could have done better. You find you’ll learn more as you go along. I also discovered in reflection, that I wasn’t doing as well as I thought I was – and it was backed up by the Command Climate surveys.

CO12 discussed her confidence:

My confidence in command waxed and waned. It should not have varied as much, which I discovered when one of my mentors was chewing me out. ‘Remember, your worst day is still better than best day anywhere else!’... Keep your head up–Don’t let them see you drag. We kept the crew safe, suffered no major personnel mishaps. I was a CHENG so I know that things do break–fix them.

### **Accomplishments/ Disappointments**

CO12 knew she was not alone:

I had friends in command about same time and having been the CSO on the DESRON helped since I had closely observed five different COs, who were

available when I had questions or new challenges. The best days are when you can do something really good for a Sailor or their families. I was able to Command Advance a deserving Sailor with his wife in attendance at the surprise ceremony.

CO12 knew:

It's also great when you can pull off a tricky maneuver when ship handling. Our RHIB failed and was DIW one night. We made an UNREP style approach, stopped beside it, and completed the recovery around 0300.

### **Sample Artifacts and Handouts**

CO12 discussed the philosophy of "Command Philosophies:"

I recall that the command philosophies I read were by COs who never followed them and I didn't want to put in writing that I couldn't live up to. The Command Climate Survey made me wish I had it written down. I delivered my philosophy verbally, often.

I have three priorities: Operational readiness, Mission readiness, and Family readiness. Understand how these three things mesh together to build success. Our return from deployment goal was to make sure all came back safely. Across the tour, priorities shift. The Predeployment focus was on Family readiness as #1. Then operational and mission readiness take over as soon as you get to sea.

### **Advice for Those Who Would Follow the Path to Command**

CO12 left this advice for those who follow:

To Department Heads:

As Department Head think about what it means to command. Learn the ship, your equipment, and your people. Discern that what you learn now will apply on every ship. Figure out how to transfer the lessons? Treat your department as a command—learn from it—admit mistakes—learn from them. Ask for advice from the CO, XO, and other Department Heads, and look around. Do the homework—decide to learn how to do it. Realize that many leadership lessons still can be learned. A Department Head creates results that travel down to second and third order effects.

To XOs:

If you have some time, clear some space between XO to CO. As XO, your job is forceful support of CO, and forceful support may be making a call above them...

but that should be your last option. Get with CO and clarify expectations. I was blest since my CO said ‘my job is to make you a CO. Run the ship, tell me when you need something.’ Realize that Department Head’s report to the CO for operational matters, not you... but know what’s going on. Learn to be the warfighter—not just the administrator. As you think of new or better solutions, ask yourself–‘Is it really that easy?’ Think about how you would do it; but you’re not the CO, yet. Be prepared to insert yourself. Think about it. Talk it over with your CO.

For XO Fleetups:

The same lessons apply. Remember, you are the Executive Officer—the fact that you will become the CO is irrelevant. But be careful that personality conflict doesn’t hinder your effectiveness. We all have to adopt multiple personalities. As XO, YOU have to get the ship clean.

To the CO:

You have an advantage from previous COs in that you know the crew. Leverage that. In the old days a Change of Command gave everyone a ‘clean slate.’ Try to make that the case. Make sure you’re making your XO ready for command.

She recalled:

A lot of things you do in the XO job serve well for the job as CO. Make sure the paper before Mast is perfect. Think about how to handle Captain’s Mast. As XO, I kept the MCM on my desk. Know the procedures to take and be prepared to discover how to handle special instances. As XO on first day I had to learn how to take and officer to mast. Know where to look and who can help (BUPERS 832). That XO experience served me well as CSO when in the third week we took two officers to Commodore’s Mast. Remember what your resources are—Lawyers help.

She was surprised:

I found Captain’s Mast harder than I was prepared for it to be. The crew’s vision of you changes; your ‘vision of you’ changes when you get to the other side of the podium. Be prepared. Be yourself.

## **Drawings of Relative Challenges, Experience, and Performance**

CO12's drawings indicated her early COs had lower level of challenges because they were resource rich, post Desert Storm, people rich, and there was no FRTP. She drew her level as much higher due to Force Protection requirements, scarcity, high OPTEMPO, optimal manning, the FRTP, and unpredictability of tasking.

She had said that the level of challenge were similar-but the challenges very different. She felt the challenge of command changed as the Navy faced different problems; but concluded the "job of command" is much the same.

## **Summary of Analyses**

CO12 represented the first group of women SWOs who have achieved command of combatant ships. CO12 noted:

- The mix of training and experience
- The pace of the schedule
- The information age
- The role of Mentors
- The slow Pace of Culture change: She faced a few barbs based on the "Invasion of the Sailorettes."

CO12 demonstrated the *Execution* behavior "*Know yourself*" (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 57). CO12 exemplified the naval officer's quality of "*charity*" (Bogle & Holwitt, 2004, p. 18). CO12 demonstrated the "H" (Hope) component of the RICH model.

CO12's father had been a SWO and ship's Captain. She was one of four COs in this study who followed in the family's business. Being recognized by Nordic seamen as one of them, she has maintained the Heritage.

## **CO13. The Sailor**

CO13 commanded a MHC from 2003 to 2005 and FFG between 2009 and 2010.

### **Personal Background/ Motivation**

CO13's father had been in the Navy years before he was born:

Command is something I always wanted to do. I was always interested in boats and the sea and leading. I grew up around sailing and the water so it seems my desire for command was 'always there'... I spent summers leading and teaching at camps ...sailed my whole life, we even took family vacations on boats. I had been President of my class-always a leader among my peers – even at NAPS as Honor Chairman, a company commander at USNA, and a YP 'CO' for a summer training cruise. From my first ship, I aspired to command and along the way, observed and experienced a large range of COs.

### **Path to Command, Preparation, JO Experiences, Key People, Events**

CO13 followed the SWO career path with an interesting twist. As a DIVO, he was on a ship with a surplus of junior officers. He served as the Administrative Officer, Strike Officer, and Legal Officer. In each role, he gained valuable experience that would serve him well throughout his career. He lived through command turnover, several incidents of "oops's-sailors being sailors," and a homeport shift to Japan from San Diego. As a brand new OOD, he had the chance to see how a CO responded to his report of changing course to avoid "gazillions" of small boats/ fishing craft. As OOD, he turned the ship around and called CO to report his action and the circumstances. The CO thanked him for calling, even mentioning it again the following day:

I wondered why he was so thankful. It made me think about how COs must think. What an awesome responsibility. "It brought to mind a key phrase from every CO's Night Orders- 'when in doubt, call me.' It meant the CO was saying 'Let me have a chance.' I carried to command a wealth of knowledge....let me have an opportunity to insert my experience. Don't remove my opportunity to help.'

CO13 noted:

Enroute to the ship, the Navy sent me to SWOS basic, then to STRIKE, Naval Tactical Data System (NTDS), and Legal schools....Having been around the sea all my life, I was surprised that some of my peers shied away from being 'the guy' on the bridge....my background gave me the confidence to stand up and serve when the opportunity arose.

CO13 recalled being 12, with his 15-year-old brother, allowed to take the family boat out without supervision.

CO13 had been selected for the Nuclear Propulsion program, but opted for sea tour prior to going to Nuclear Power School. Although a top performer at sea, he struggled with some of the technical courses and was academically dropped after five months. The Bureau sent him to an engineering tour on a CVN, as E- division officer. Several leading Flag officers have followed that same path on their journey to command at the highest levels.

CO13 then was off to NPS in Monterey studying National Security Affairs and Strategic Planning. Afterwards, he attended SWOS Department Head school and was assigned to a Frigate as OPS:

I experienced a very steep learning curve, as my CO explained that there was no harder job in the Navy than being a department head... balancing (or bouncing) between leadership and management challenges... I really learned the depth of responsibility.

From the FFG I then went to OPS on CG.... Adjusting to the strong personality of the CO for first 8 months was difficult, but the new CO was admirable. He trusted us like we knew what we were doing...going through pre-deployment workups opened my eyes on what to be thinking about, we deployed and executed assignments professionally.

CO13 had been selected for command at LT level:

I was then ordered to the CRUDESGRU staff in the same Carrier Battle Group as the ship I had been ALPHA WHISKEY on....My job was the Flag Secretary and daily involved with the Admiral's trials and tribulations. I was exposed to staff

work that was not necessarily helpful to improving our ships.... I did learn some important things about how, as a CO, to interact with my boss and the 'supporting' staffs. From there, I went to MHC command after falling out on a chance to be a Whitehouse Fellow. CO13 seemed to value his new perspective at the LCDR command level, and appreciated his Cruiser and CSG staff tours more for command view development.

### **Command Experience(s)/ Challenges**

CO13 commanded a MHC between 2003–2005 and an FFG between 2008 and 2010.

CO early was it worth it? "Absolutely, all COs were all about being in command!" Following his MHC Command tour, CO13 then was assigned to OPNAV in N6/ which became N3-5. He opted for a 7-month Individual Augmentee (IA) assignment to CENTCOM. CO13 echoed others who have noted "...Sea going Officers are not always in possession of the right mindset to succeed inside the Beltway... In the Fleet, we can make decisions, act and follow-up to fix what's wrong, in DC you just wait...."

CO13 was selected for Commander Command and followed the XO-CO fleet up process. He spent 8 months as XO and then took command of the ship prior to deployment. His experience was a four day turnover from XO to CO, "I sat in 'Q' and waited. Now, we have a month between the jobs and better timing of schedules. My CO tour was 19 months."

### **Challenges**

His MHC command experience—in Ingleside TX—started with an immediate challenge from one of his crusty Sailors. "The Mine Warfare community has a way that works that does not cater to any of that fancy ship cruiser B/S." CO13 thought "...Maybe I could influence a better/ higher level of performance to make things right—exactly the challenge I could deal with..." He continued:

Several BIG NAVY decisions on manning, organization, and facilities impacted the achievable level of excellence. In an effort to consolidate mine warfare experience and take more advantage of cross-training, the Mine Warfare community experienced Rate consolidations. We had no depth- gone were Fleet trained QMs and BMs and even EN/ MMs, in place were Minemen who had been experienced Mine Warfare Sailors.

CO13 exclaimed:

The XO or CO were the only ones with experience of Navy/Fleet expectations and the potential of good performance. That decision may have solved some Bureau problems, but did nothing to help ships. We had fewer supervisors/ or ones with no experience (several E6 came back to Mine community after out of 'rate' assignments). OS, QM/SM, all were lumped into 'Minemen.' We later experienced this in droves across the Navy. It was not unusual to get a 'senior' E6 who has been working out of rate for three-four years, with no rate focused school on return....

The most dangerous thing on the Mine Force was eliminating BM's. Not having experienced seamen and Bos'n Mates led to more dangers for the inexperienced crews.... I don't think the Navy does small ships very well, and those decisions made it harder for those in command to succeed.

Additionally, the Mine Force took on similar reductions in manning (20-30%) as other ships, and lost basic and advanced in-house schooling and inport repair capabilities. "The support, always lacking in the Mine Warfare community, eroded to minimal." But for CO13 it opened up possibilities: "We did get East Coast deployments, and gave me the chance to realize 'you are the guy'."

CO13 noted that the Command level Leadership course experience helped using case studies of hypothetical problems. But, within 3 months, "I had experiences that would qualify as real life examples." "The best advice: reinforce to do what's right- but now seems like we are questioned about doing what we did."

CO13's commander command found him:

Well prepared. Yes, we do need more engineering since I didn't really have that background... the new SOSMRC should help. My experience as Legal Officer benefitted me immensely, both as XO and CO. As a former OPSO, I knew the

ropes on managing the schedule and fending off some of the demands from my seniors. It is hard to manage ship materiel. We need to make sure we can have broken equipment fixed sooner. We are deferring maintenance to when it becomes 'mission critical.'

CO13 charged:

Some ships know what is wrong, but have been told not to report defects via CASREPs. Only when I lost the third firepump was I able to get attention to fix them; and then, only enough to restore up to minimal acceptable....because we have chosen to not fix' things that are broken. We have a loss of redundancies—sailors, materiel, ...It is a 'recipe for disaster.'

CO13 also noted that:

Cost consciousness seemed misguided. My FFG went from 220 to 172 authorized manning. ...We don't have the right people in right rates w/ right skill sets to keep the platforms ready. The '5 vector model/ Sea Warrior' program didn't get executed...COs now must be much more reliant on themselves to figure out what's going on because their senior ship leaders don't have the experience to project the effect of a problem rather than the system... No schools, no full time trainers, trainees, or supervisors... OJT presupposes we have both the knowledge and the time to do it.

CO13 felt the "squeeze:"

Our Force Protection (FP) requirements are enormous... executing them demands time away from learning and fixing gear... My entire crew must be small arms qualified to give bodies to serve on security force augments... These quals take them away from being professionals/ no one can earn 'journeyman' status.... Sometimes I am not surprised by some of the 'police blotter' reports.

We have cut out every bit of redundancy. If you lose a Sailor who is your weapons qualification czar, you cannot get the whole ship trained on their small arms. No one is there to fill the unexpected gap.

CO13 suggested:

At SWOS, we could do better keeping the school's information and expectations up to date. The data they have in ship's folders was very hit and miss. I have kept some of my books from Basic. Today's JO's have a CD. And, we have placed too much faith and reliance on OJT. You have to invest talent and time; and we have neither in abundance.

CO13 recalled:

As a DIVO, I felt capable in PMS and had a CPO/WCS to help me. But now no CPOs have the knowledge or understanding of PMS to pass it to their JO's. On some ships, only the COs actually remember how to make the system work! I keep hearing different tales about the CPO mess. I saw and was disappointed to learn that the level of expertise and knowledge is just not there. Some can only go back to what they were told by the last guy. None have gone to the references to review what they're supposed to do in basic programs.

CO13 was thankful for mentors:

One good thing the TYCOM has started is sending 'Mentors' onto ships during workups to aid ship COs. COs can employ that experienced eye to get where the CO and XO can't. The mentor—who does not report formally off the ship—can help the CO/XO/TAOs see what they saw during COMPTUEX/ JTFEX. It seems to be well received; especially if we have the right balance of mentor/ teaching. This period allowed COs to discuss thinking and decisions with an experienced mariner.

### **Practices**

CO13 noted:

I went to my XO tour that other LCDR COs got to skip. I hadn't wanted to be a Fleet Up guy—but kept it to myself. I tried to stay conscious on what I said and how I responded to things. You have to be careful to stay level. One Chief who knew I would become the CO wondered 'what policies are you going to change when you become CO? So I can keep my sailors out of trouble. Sailors are conscious of the XO-CO process. I think as an XO-CO fleetup, we may have the ability to shape programs over a longer time.

CO13 reported:

Since I had been a Department Head, the number of people who thronged to see the ship multiplied. I tried to make sure I knew who they were and why they were there. In dealing with my seniors, there were a couple of times when I could tell the Commodore was probing for information on 'why' certain things happened the way he thought they did. When I was a Department Head, the message coming off the ship was managed better. Now a guy from the staff comes down for two seconds and reports something back to Commodore who immediately calls you up. We have less room to maneuver due to the many lines of comms.

CO13 observed:

I watched how we did certain events. We had the normal measures of inspections. I used the CO's suggestion box, and watched how professionally we performed basic seamanship and shipwide events. Our advancement numbers and officer retention were around Fleet average.

CO13 mused:

How to help the CO stay out in front of information flow is challenging. The upper chain of command's appetite for information is mind-numbing. It has led to an expectation that COs have to know everything about everything.

CO13 concluded:

One of the different things I saw as a Department Head was that the XO ran the ship and the CO was there to help. For example, Berth shifts happen, often on short notice. COs now never allow just the XO to move the ship. It is a rare day that the CO is not on the ship for any basic evolution. I am not sure how this came about. Struggling ships used to go to the 'penalty box,' but without any extra support or trust from our seniors. All ships are in the equivalent of the 'penalty box.' We have cut out any redundancy: ships, people, equipment... such that no back up exists.

CO13 kept talking about seniors and the quest for information:

There is an unquenchable thirst for detail and minutia. It stems from the CNO's blotter. (To which I attribute the reason why we don't take seriously any promises from the Flags that they are working to take care of our people and their problems.) Most of the new policies are working to get rid of sailors, for a number of specified reasons that may not improve overall readiness.

CO13 commented on the rise of Administrative programs:

Instead of demanding COs lead and manage the ship through their officers and chiefs, we have created so many programs that each one has several to manage for the whole command. So instead of taking care of their people, Chiefs are taking care of programs. Most personnel pay and advancement problems must be dealt with outside the lifelines since we transferred those responsibilities ashore.

### **Accomplishments/ Disappointments**

CO13 still enjoyed the ride:

I enjoyed most of the time as XO, then CO, in spite of the overbearing presence of second guessing. We made things happen and qualified all the officers. We made

an Africa Partnership Station deployment and carried the Sixth Fleet Band. Other than that, we were un-augmented. We faced lots of handwringing on what American Sailors could teach those developing Navy's in details of small engine repair and other small aspects expected from 'professional' Navy. We were expected to provide training on small engine repair; but none of my Sailors knew enough to teach it. We were talent poor in those regards. Many of our 'engineering' Sailors have never fixed an engine or even used a wrench.

CO13 asserted:

When COs work to take care of their ships, they become just a source to buff up another ship who wasn't looking ahead. For instance, we had home grown ASTACs, that were then ripped off to get another ship to deploy. We faced a constant feeling of 'can't win.' The support isn't there.

CO13 wondered:

I am not sure we have employed the advances in technology, especially in learning styles. The Chiefs need to return to their old roles of being the SME as well as the mentors. Knowledge is not power; most people do not understand what is expected of them because standards aren't enforced at the right level. Moreover, Seniors are not standing up for juniors who make small mistakes.

CO13 reflected:

I would have done this differently. Due to our engineering struggles, I need a key hand to help me understand what was really happening since my engineer was not the best. I was slow to recognize we were not continuing to enforce the standards.

CO13 discovered he was not alone:

I thought the problems I've been talking about were confined to the Frigates. But in a recent detailer session, I heard miserable tales of what it's like in command. COs have been 'ABSOLUTELY BEATEN DOWN. Everything has legs outside the lifelines. We have focused too much on 'other stuff' instead of the real mission. We 'coddle' folks and fail to expect them to act like adults; but we don't treat them like adults. After a junior Sailor undergoes a DUI investigation, 'Because he was 18 and stupid' is no longer an acceptable conclusion. It is smoked out as a leadership failure and the DIVO and CPO get the real blame.

## **Sample Artifacts and Handouts**

CO13 did not provide any artifacts.

### **Advice for Those Who Would Follow the Path to Command**

CO13 offered this advice:

To Department Heads:

Being the CO can be most rewarding and most frustrating experience of your life. You'll have lots of questions, do some 'soul searching' do you want to step up to the challenge? If so, great! If not, I'm not sure what you're doing here. Some COs admit they were conflicted in relishing their tours. They didn't want to appear hypocritical. Department Heads need to see their CO enjoy command. I miss the last month we were deployed; I miss last the final events. I don't miss the interference.

Understand good stress and bad stress. When the command circuit runs straight from four stars to four stripes we have a chain of command problem. How does that 4 star expect us to get stuff fixed when they are taking about providing time, tools, and resources; but make us meet the schedule with the available people short over 20 bodies and the resources inadequate to provide any extra maintenance to relive the burden on ship's force.

To XOs:

You are the XO– do not forget that others are watching what you say/ do with respect to the CO. Do not do anything to undermine your CO. Know the details- XOs must personally do the most important things. People programs, paperwork (FITREPs and EVALS), daily XO messing and berthing matter enormously. My XO didn't want to do them; he wanted to delegate them; when he did and I checked on the status, he failed the test.

We don't really focus on basics. We talk, but we don't do them: Quarter deck, PMS, Standards of performance- Zone Inspections. Doing it right ripples through command and establishes a sense of ownership. It is harder to maintain that feeling of ownership, since there are so many spaces and so few man-hours. There is so much focus on 'all the other stuff' PTS, physical fitness–everybody's not a leader.

To COs:

For COs coming back in to Command from XO: Get some rest; they will watch you closely on what you do. Be yourself; keep doing the right things because it's

the right thing to do. Enjoy it when you can. We are getting to become more spread out, cross trained, and less specialized; but we have become masters of none. The magnitude of challenge seemed far greater for me than for my previous COs.

### **Drawings of Relative Challenges, Experience, and Performance**

CO13 first graphed his perception of the level of authority allowed the CO between his first ship and the one he commanded as a CDR. He indicated a distinct drop in what COs could control. As for challenges, he considered his much greater due to reductions in resources and people (manning) and the rise of requirements from operations and program management across commands.

His command tour began on deployment and he took the ship through a DSRA, then through the workups, and turned over about two months prior to the ship's next deployment. He graphed his performance as high on both ends with a slow decline and recovery as the ship went into the yard period and slowly worked back to deploy. He indicated the ship was performing at a higher level as he left. His second XO was also going to Fleet up and was gifted with a squared away and qualified ship.

### **Summary of Analyses**

In reviewing CO13's responses, several themes emerged: the value of the SWO Path, the long term effect of a CO, Comments on Manning and misguided Cost consciousness, Force Protection (FP) requirements, the concept of "Doubt," the loss of redundancy, the tentacles of command, and the lost focus on what it means to be Navy. Everything has legs outside the skin of the ship:

CO13 demonstrated the *Execution* behavior "*Know yourself*" (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 57). CO13 exemplified the naval officer's quality of "*not blind*" (Bogle &

Holwitt, 2004, p. 18). CO13 demonstrated the “C” (Confidence) component of the RICH model.

CO13 became the “Sailor.” It seemed obvious from his time on the ocean—both before and in the Navy. He made other COs better.

## **CO14. The Warrior**

CO14 commanded a PC between 2000 and 2002 and a DDG between 2008 and 2010.

### **Personal Background/ Motivation**

CO14 was a standard Surface Warfare Officer. He was a Naval Academy graduate and spent his first years on a new AEGIS cruiser. He recalled “distinctly:”

That my Captain had a senior Captain or one star come to visit the Wardroom, and he talked about the Navy’s new ‘Patrol Coastals’–PCs. I thought it would be really cool to command one of those ships as a Lieutenant. In my departure interview, my second CO told me ‘You’ve got what it takes to command at sea. I envision you in command in a few years.’ That conversation set me up for an immediate goal for command of a PC.

### **Path to Command, Preparation, JO Experiences, Key People, Events**

CO14 continued:

On that AEGIS cruiser, I began on the ‘pre-comm’ crew for a year and completed a 51 month tour, 39 of them at sea. We did all the shakedown training, deployment workups, and a Med deployment during which we deployed to the Arabian Gulf. Returning, we did advanced AEGIS testing. I had started as the OI Division Officer under the Combat Information Center Officer (CICO), an experienced LDO. and had great CPOs and E6’s.

Then I was the Auxiliaries Officer (AUX O), and completed my time on board as the Communications Officer (COMMO) / and Assistant OPSO. As one of the senior DIVOs, the new CO pulled me to be COMMO because he needed someone he trusted. When I left I had completed all qualifications, including Force ALPHA WHISKEY, except TAO. I knew that ship like the back of my hand. Then, I went to the Naval Postgraduate School in Joint C4I, and afterwards worked as an ‘Associate Fellow’ on high level Command and Control projects at the Naval War College.

He continued:

From there, I went to SWOS Department Head School and Operations Officer on *Cole*. We worked through the training cycle, and I left just before JTFEX. I had two great COs as mentors, and they helped me get the PC command. Both of

them wrote great FITREPs and endorsements, and even made phone calls to the Bureau pushing me for PC command.

After PC command, I went as a student to the Naval War College, and then to be the XO on a DDG. I picked it up from Basic, Maintenance, redo Basic and COMPTUEX passed to relief after 19 months as XO. Then to BUPERS for two and a half years, and took command of a DDG in June 2008.

CO14 noted: “I faced no barriers – I was just blest with great COs and crews. I was lucky.”

### **Command Experience(s)/ Challenges**

CO14 commanded a PC between 2000 and 2002 and a DDG between 2008 and 2010, deploying to do Maritime Security and Counter-piracy Operations off Somalia:

I felt well prepared except for some engineering things. It was intimidating on the PC as I arrived. I was confident as a ship handler and knew my way around CIC. I had lots of stick time with first cruiser, and had been the ‘go to guy’ for the second CO, so I felt confident. Driving the PC was awesome. I felt prepared for command of the PC, and because of that, ‘way prepared’ for the DDG. If I had not had command, it would have been different, but it was easy to slip back in to the Command role as soon as I got aboard the DDG.

### **Challenges**

CO14 thought:

If I would compare my challenge versus what I saw for my first COs, my challenges seemed greater. It seemed on the CG and my first DDG that we were flush with dollars. In OI Division, I had 50 OS’s, 12 were first class, with three Chiefs, one was a senior chief. Things got fixed, parts came in. On the DDG we faced ‘optimal manning,’ which is not optimal but reduced manning. Maintenance dollars and capabilities had been cut back. We had a robust SWO DOC. I was not a big fan of sending DIVOs immediately to sea. And when I told the Flag officer, I was ‘put in my place.’

CO14 related:

I had taken over the DDG in end of Basic phase at the half-way point of yard period. Following our sea trial underway (U/W), we returned and finished Basic. We became the Navy test ship for a remote mine hunting system. That gave us

lots of time to practice, flex the ship, and qualify on our Basic watchstations and seamanship evolutions.

When I relieved, the DIVOs I inherited were all qualified and had a full seven-month deployment with NATO under their belts, so they were skilled at operating. They helped me train the next group. The Department Heads were about half way through their tours; we even still had a few pre-comm guys on ship as I took over. Their high standards carried over to the oncoming crews.

CO14 reflected:

Our decisions to begin cutting manning to save money hurt. On the DDG as Department Heads, we had studied the workload and came up with need for about 10 more people. Our submission was bounced back saying: 'wrong answer.' We had been manned around 320– and eventually we had to cut back. On the DDG as XO, we had 325 as I began, but were down to 275 when I left my XO tour 19 months later. That number was probably good.

CO14 spoke on manning:

In my CO tour on the DDG, we got down to 219 and I was very concerned about meeting mission. I estimated we needed about 50 more people. I left on deployment with around 254; I think that's about what it is supposed to be now. I am hearing that ships are going out at 90% by moving bodies from other ships. Since late 2003, we had to pull guys off ships to go as IA's (Individual Augmentees) to assist some joint and Army manning shortfalls ashore supporting operations in Iraq. I think the Navy paid the price for Army and USMC growth.

CO14 spoke on the reduction of training for sailors enroute to the ships:

Additionally, we lost the enlisted schooling pipeline. There was the dumbing down of 'A schools;' it was all computer-based training. The Flag officers seemed to think that training the new generation to fix pumps, valves, and electronic systems on the computer was the answer. We missed the whole learning picture. The junior enlisted crew are hungry to learn, but no one is there now to teach them.

CO14 addressed AT/FP:

The impact of the emphasis on AT/FP has had a very interesting effect on the crew. I maintained six sections in port, ensuring that duty sections could man the extra watches caused by AT/FP requirements. But found that after we came back from deployment in the Fall of '09, the Fleet Commander placed even more emphasis on Force Protection. I am still unclear as to why we are doing the same things in our homeports as we were doing in foreign ports. Are we really under a serious AT threat in Navy Homeports (HPs)?

CO14 charged:

When we went down to the shipyard, we had to maintain a small boat underway and man a topside heavy weapon because the Navy couldn't provide a barrier. The burden was placed on the ship. We collapsed to three sections, it was 'criminal.'

### **Practices**

CO14 discussed getting around the ship:

I like talking to people. I was an MBWA guy. I test as a strong ENTJ/ but lately F sometimes shows up. I would go out seeking direct feedback. How are we doing? How are you getting ready for the next hurdle? Listening below the level is a key trait for COs.

CO14 discussed relations with seniors:

Great relationship with first DESRON. But the new Commodore was focused on deploying again and we got hardly any support. You really need that DESRON support and feedback to fight the 'Battle of Norfolk.' Got beat up on a ULTRA S after we got back that had more to do with personalities than performance.

CO14 discussed INSURV preps:

I knew on my DDG we had to be working for a year to be ready for our INSURV that would occur 6 months after I turned over. My INSURV experience was driven from my XO tour on the DDG. The PCO and I worked from SWOS, when I was in PXO training, on making sure we would be ready. I used that concept to get my ship ready for what would hit them in six months.

### **Accomplishments/ Disappointments**

We conducted Independent Ops off Somalia; at one point we got to capture some pirates, and serve as a platform for other missions. One of the key practices I tried to help my crews with was understanding Gary Klein's *Recognition-primed decision* (RPD). Use your experience and judgment and decide; and continually review, so you can change course to a better outcome. He talked about his CMCs:

As CO, my first CMC was good but we were not really connected. I wound up relying on the senior IS, who will soon be a CMC. My second CMC for my last

six months was awesome. I wished that CMC had been with me. My XO was heading off to command.

### **Sample Artifacts and Handouts**

CO14 provided several versions of his Command philosophy and showed evidence of how it matured from a DIVO leadership philosophy to his PC command and DDG Department Head rides. He also shared a 1992 letter to future COs from two cruiser COs on things to check. The guidance in there, as in *Command at Sea*, is timeless.

He also shared Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command's "Operational Excellence" message from 2004:

Standards and Conduct is an important effort that continues the fleet's focus on instilling and maintaining high standards in all our sailors.... The effort is aimed at ensuring every individual and their chain of command understand existing standards and to ensure that they understand their conduct is expected to be on par with Navy and public expectation that all sailors comport themselves as professionals at all times.

The relatively new initiative contains five areas of emphasis, none of them a new concept, which leaders are to reinforce:

- Pride and professionalism
- Operational excellence and safety
- Sailor relations
- Substance abuse
- A culture of fitness

A few may perceive this as a passing matter. It is not. My experience has taught me that the ships, submarines and squadrons that have sharp, motivated sailors are most often the same units that are operationally ready and effective. Simply put, the standards you maintain are the outward reflection of your command and its readiness to fight. (U.S. Fleet Forces Command, 2004)

CO14 expounded this effort to his troops:

- Strive to be the best. Do things by the book. Work hard and stay motivated—concern for sailors and families, be respectful and honest.
- Communicate, delegate, monitor, and follow-up.
- Quality assurance, FIX IT RIGHT.

“Several older documents—e.g., the 25 year old pub *Command Excellence*—still resonates today. Good leadership and caring for people always apply. I retained copies of many good articles on COs’ practices over the years.”

### **Advice for Those Who Would Follow the Path to Command**

CO14 left this advice for those who follow:

To Department Heads:

Department Head should be the hardest tour—continue learning the profession—a make or break tour—know your areas, but also branch out. Know the ship, crew, all the parts. Teamwork, camaraderie. As CO, XO want that—‘ship focused’ not ‘department focused.’

For XOs:

PXO is awesome opportunity to shape your destiny under the CO. Only one CO on the ship. Felt most ready at end of my XO tour. You will be the most ready to take command. You will know the ship and the crew—who to trust and who you have seen grow. You’ve led the STT—and imbued your standards.

For the COs:

You are not the XO anymore. Take command, delegate and follow through. XO, especially on the cruiser, more ship focused. CO more focused up and out. Need to be communicating outward. Use peers on waterfront as confidants. Your relationship with the CMC is very important. As XO, I had awesome CMC’s. We conducted business during running at lunch, and we were able to go as united front to the CO. The second CMC was also great. He had been an SSN COB and Squadron CMC.

## **Drawings of Relative Challenges, Experience, and Performance**

CO14 thought that his first CO's level of challenge, especially when compared to working hours in port, was lower. CO14 confessed to working past 1800 many nights in homeport. Rarely did he recall his COs ever staying much past 4 PM. He graphed his ship's performance as rising during the preparations and on deployment and then slowly stabilizing as the deployment ended and a maintenance period began.

## **Summary of Analyses**

CO14's responses drove several themes: the effect of manning reductions, the necessity of personal initiative, the help from a boost from a Mentor, and the importance of Command Philosophy Development. CO14 seemed destined for command and took the early steps to indicate he desired command. Then he has spent his career gathering information, putting it into practice and refining a personal command philosophy. CO14 noted his Command philosophy showed evidence of maturing from a DIVO leadership philosophy to his PC command and DDG Department Head tours. He also shared a 1992 letter to future COs from two cruiser COs on things to check as CO. The guidance in there, as in *Command at Sea*, is timeless. CO14 provided comments on the timelessness of good advice:

Several older documents—e.g., the 25 year old pub *Command Excellence* still resonates today. Good leadership and caring for people always apply. I retained copies of many good CO practice/ writings over the years. I used them to fashion my own philosophy of command.

CO14 demonstrated the *Execution* behavior “*Insist on realism*” (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 57). CO14 exemplified the naval officer’s quality of “*firmness*”(Bogle & Holwitt, 2004, p. 18). CO14 demonstrated the “R” (Realistic optimism) component of the RICH model.

CO14 became the Warrior due to his cool actions to rescue hostages from Pirates and never talk about it.

## **CO15. The Character**

CO15 commanded a PC from 2001 to 2003 and an LSD from 2008 to 2009.

### **Personal Background/ Motivation**

CO15 related:

The first time I heard about PC command was from a Lieutenant while I was an Ensign in Newport at SWOS DOC... You can command a 'little ship that goes fast with guns?' ...I wanted PC command. The concept of Command is sort of drummed into you at Annapolis that, in the Surface Navy, to be a success, you have to command... it's not really true. I had many friends who had good careers and never got to command. I got to command, twice.

CO15 noted the effect of Flag officers:

PC COs also faced 'Flag officer double speak.' They were not all in support of early chances for command. 'You're not really a CO, you're just a Department Head in command.' There seemed to be a lot of stigma against those of us who commanded PCs..... My cohorts and I didn't screen for XO on our first looks, and none of us screened for LCDR command. A few Flag officers asked me why I wanted to put myself under the gun because if I screwed up in LT Command, my career would be shot.... And later, the Surface TYCOM, when the PCs had just returned from deployment, welcomed us back first with 'If it were up to me, I'd decommission all of you because you are taking money and talent away from the Surface fleet.'

(Note this was the same Flag Officer who had dismissed CO14's questions about reductions in manning, training, and maintenance support.)

CO15 surmised: "The new mine ship commanders will have a problem since they are to be third tour Department Heads and go to undermanned, underfunded, underappreciated ships."

### **Path to Command, Preparation, JO Experiences, Key People, Events**

CO15 reported:

I graduated from USNA and went straight to SWOS DOC for basic Division Officer Training. Then, I went to an LPD for 36 months, 18 as Electrical Officer,

and 18 as Combat Systems Officer. As a SWO LT, I then went to an overseas homeported BIG DECK AMPHIB as the AUXO. I then went ashore to be a sailing instructor at USNA, where I became the Small Boat Fleet Maintenance Officer, and, also, taught Navigation to Plebes and Strategy and Tactics to First Class.

CO15 continued:

As the Maintenance Officer, I recruited some Chiefs, and an Engineman and we trained a group of basic Seamen to take care of the small boats. I got bored and sought the Instructor assignments. I was 'forced' to spend my summers sailing to and from Newport, RI. Then, I went to SWOS Department Head School and on to an LSD to be the First LT. I also served as Navigator and Senior Watch Officer. When we went into the shipyard, I was made the Yard Coordinator. CO knew I was interested in PC Command and supported my dream when I was informed that I had been selected for LT command.

CO15 regaled:

When the Bureau called, I surprisingly was told that I had been ordered to an LHA since there were no PC's available. I turned my attention to helping the ship get through the yard period when BUPERS called again as my CO and I were headed off the ship to a progress meeting. I told the CO I needed to take the call and would meet him in a few minutes. 'Can you be in Newport by April to relive as CO in June?' I told them I would drive to Norfolk that night. But they said my CO had to call and release me first. When I told the CO, he helped me get through; and I had even told the XO that if he didn't sign the CO's letter, I would kill him since then I'd be XO, and the letter releasing me would still go.' So now I was going to PC Command, and took command before I reached my 10-year point in the Navy.

CO15 spoke up about AMPHIBS:

As a guy whose record was marked AMPHIB, one is locked into AMPHIBS for life. The only ship I was on that didn't start with an L was the PC. A guy who is in CRUDES can go to AMPHIBS, and do; but there is no way to go from AMPHIBs to CRUDES.

CO15 continued:

I followed my PC CO tour with a tour at SWOS. My job there was to implement the replacement for SWOS DOC. I attended the Naval War College, and took 'no cost' orders to SWOS while awaiting an LSD command opportunity in Japan. From Japan, the Bureau had promised me a tour in Norfolk, but I was sent to HQ USMC in DC.

It turns out I was the only career AMPHIB experienced officer on that part of the staff. I relieved a P3 guy who had taken over from a LAMPS guy. I had become 'Third order category' once I fell off further viability for Command at sea.

### **Command Experience(s)/ Challenges**

CO15 commanded a PC between 2001 and 2003 and an LSD between 2008 and 2009.

#### **Challenges**

CO15 confessed:

My main challenge on the PC was being as good of a CO as the crew deserved. That crew was outstanding. They were cross-qualified, and especially screened, selected, and trained. My DIVOs and Department Heads were all former enlisted. I was the only member of the crew without a Good Conduct Medal. I had 17 E6 who each would have been the number one ranked E6 on any other ship in the Fleet. I was only allowed to mark early promote, 3 %, Must Promote, 10%, and Promotable. I ranked as 'Promotable' a HM1 who was my best OOD and CDO qualified. We won the Battle E, had no COs mast, had a 100% advancement rate among the Petty Officers, and 60% of the E6's made CPO.

CO15 discussed manning:

Divergent manning trends. On my first ship, an LPD, as AUX O I had 77 people, a – Division Master Chief and CPOs serving as Work Center Supervisors. On the LSD I had 58 Sailors in my Department, and in PC Command, my crew size was less than thirty. When I was on the LSD as XO, we mustered around 350, LSD I commanded only had 270. It seems Sailors are a commodity, and even though the senior officers talk about their value, we do not truly value them. Sailors have become a commodity that we can work like dogs, and then if they don't reenlist, we can get more.

CO15 discussed Failings of the system:

As XO on the LSD, the Sailors weren't trained. I had to become the 'screaming, ranting lunatic XO' to get folks to respond. There was a precipitous falloff in Department Head quality and knowledge from those who had missed the benefit of early SWOS Division Officer courses after SWOS DOC changed.

CO15 disclosed his thoughts on the circumstances on his LSD:

The circumstances under which I relieved were fraught with peril. I was told I needed to get to Japan and relieve immediately...and that I could fire the engineer

and others once I arrived. The outgoing CO, who was a (racial) minority that was not supposed to fail, had not qualified any officers during his tenure, and the whole ship was in danger of failing. It needed to be no glaring spotlight that would place the Admiral and the staff in a bad light. I thought I could fix it if I received overhead support similar to what I had experienced in other crisis situations during my career. Boy, was I wrong.

### *Practices*

CO15 knew he was challenged:

Everything demanded my personal involvement on the Commander command. Issues that on the PC would be solved by second and third class pretty officers were passed up the chain to me- or worse yet, ignored until I discovered what we were doing wrong. The 'Mission-focus' efforts from that first ship just didn't exist out in the AMPHIB Force in Japan.

CO15 discussed how to learn leadership:

I realized we learn to 'lead by leading' and Command presents an even more intense and ramped up learning curve. You can't know what it's like to command until you command. And, even when you get there and think you've got it, you haven't arrived yet. SWOS does the best job it can preparing you; but you are still on your own.

CO15 matured:

I became more comfortable in knowing what I didn't know. I remember my first Captain on the LPD who made us focus on knowing 'who, what, where, why, when, how long and how much' when we brought any problem to him. I also appreciated what the admonition 'Call me if you have questions' really means. As the OOD on that LPD, I had suffered a complete and instantaneous loss of the Big Picture and called the CO telling him so. He came out to the Bridge, and for the next half hour, talked me through the picture so that I understood where we were, where they were, and what the safest Course of Action (COA) would be. He never rattled. I then understood 'He really means it. Call me when you have a question. Take advantage of the CO's experience and judgment to help you keep the ship safe.'

CO15 continued:

These served me well on my LSD when we were in a narrow channel approaching the pier for a port visit, and there was a ship in our berth. We had no choice, and I directed the Ship's Bos'n to 'Drop the hook,' and then told the JO with the CONN to keep us in the channel using small twists of the ship, and occasionally back down to keep the anchor dug in. I did my best to follow the 'remain calm/ steady

demeanor' on my outside. Afterwards, the JO stopped by and asked if I had ever had to anchor in the channel before? 'Just about an hour ago,' I said. He said, 'You were so calm, it looked like you had done it before.' I said, 'You couldn't see my insides. But, if I had exposed them, what would your reaction have been?'

“Oh...”

CO15 affirmed:

I also learned to appreciate that the 'First report is always wrong, and the first follow-up still has key points missing. We got a report from Main Control of an oil leak and my OOD went crazy. I pulled him back and said, 'What information do we need- Oil leak stopped, machinery secured, foam in the bilge? Find that out.' His first question was 'How much oil is there?' And, I ripped him and said, 'Do we care how much? We need to know 'Oil leak stopped, machinery secured, and there's foam in the bilge.'

And then I passed, 'When the CHENG gets a chance, not now in about 10 minutes when he understands what's going on, give me a call.' I knew that if he called immediately, he wouldn't have any answers or even an understanding of the problem. I tried to build in time for success at the lowest level. Today our seniors are second-guessing and giving directions before we finish the first report.

CO15 reflected on families:

I learned important things about keeping the families informed. On 9/11, we were up at Yorktown Naval Weapons Station loading ammunition for gun shoots. I was on the pier addressing the troops when my OOD showed me that they knew to follow my Standing Orders to the letter. One line clearly said, 'Use all means available to get my attention when it's necessary.' So he yelled: GOD DAMMIT CAPTAIN>>> GET YOUR FNG ASS UP TO THE QUARTERDECK RIGHT NOW! It was a FLASH Message directing all units to assume defensive postures. We immediately got underway and began escorting ships out of the Harbor. It was two days later that I realized I had missed calling the Ombudsmen and telling them we were OK.

He continued:

As XO on the LSD, we suffered a rocket attack in a foreign port. I had to convince the CO to make the call. I had to have CO call–forced it; I told him about me blowing it on 9/11, and he relented. It made us heroes.

CO15 discussed the information explosion:

Email and chat have made it harder–Your boss can literally second-guess every decision. We have become so risk adverse with everybody reporting everything

and second-guessing. I do not think this practice is sustainable. We need to let/make COs command.

CO15 discussed the perception of Flag accountability:

“Admiral Harvey dropped ball when he Court Martialed the XO of San Antonio.”

That case was dismissed. In another instance, he reinforced perception that Flags aren’t accountable.”

### **Accomplishments/ Disappointments**

CO15 reflected:

After my PC command, I wanted to go fix the SWOS DIVO course. But when I got there, my assignment was to implement the new Division Officer to Sea program and the elimination of SWOSDOC, and its transfer to computer-based training. The Navy has a long history of tradition –but no real progress. Change is bad, and the ‘pushback’ was epic. During one effort to sell the new SWOS DOC, I got so perturbed from listening to a CDR go on and on about how I singlehandedly was ruining the Navy. I told him I was only a LCDR and no policies were originated by LCDRs. They came from Flag Officers. I recall telling him to call 1-800-’LaFlure’ and further nailed him that he had forgotten to put on his command at sea pin- but reminded him that he didn’t have one yet and I had.

CO15 related:

While at SWOS, I tried to get a MCM, but no PC guys screened for XO or LCDR command on their first look. I screened for XO and was assigned to an LSD. That was a rude awakening. Sailors couldn’t do it; they were not trained, and none of them matched the caliber of petty officers I had on the PC. I survived as XO by assuming the bad screaming ranting lunatic XO persona to get performance. The further from SWOSDOC, the lower the quality of DIVOS and Department Heads. Even their Fitrep skills were UNSAT. They had never seen or been taught the right way.

CO15 revealed:

Once I screened for Command, I asked for Japan and knew we’d eventually be going over there. I was on a short list to be the commissioning CO of USS *New York* because I wasn’t from New York. Politics....

CO15 took more than “one for the team”:

I was caught in a bind after War College because I didn't have time for a 24 month qualifying Joint Tour, so the Bureau issued me 'no cost' orders to SWOS PXO/ PCO as an Instructor. I wound up living in the enlisted barracks and, to make matters worse, stayed there through PCO School since officially I was PCS'd to Newport.

CO15 disclosed:

I started the pipeline with orders to take command of one LSD in October, but those orders were changed and got accelerated by six months to relieve a guy struggling on another ship. My wife found out – through the 'wifenet'—before I did– even before the detailer knew. All my follow on schools were cancelled. The ship was failing, and they needed me to get into Japan just weeks after leaving Newport. I never had time to relocate my family.

CO15 divulged:

LSD command was shocking. From the freedoms I had as a LT on the PC to continuous and often overpowering guidance with no top cover to help me solve any maintenance or personnel problems on LSD. I discovered massive problems with sea duty screening. The previous CO left me to deal with an inappropriate relationship between the QMC (Chief Quartermaster) and an Officer. One of my other Officers was already married to a Chief. The Engineer, a failed Nuke, was crazy; and the First LT would spend two weeks of every month in a crying bag. Only the OPSO was somewhat capable. COs don't have enough ability to fire Department Heads. The previous CO had qualified no OODs, and no one made SWO. I took on a mentee challenge: an LT who should have been on his way out of the Navy for non-Qualification—But helped him get a chance on a new DDG as DCA.

CO15 noted:

The XO was a great guy who had PC Command also. We had no experienced and reliable CPOs. The CPOs today talk a good game, but don't do because they don't know how. The Navy does not have enough ENCMs to meet manning designs and there is no training for main propulsion Enginemen, and certainly no advanced schools. I worked hard to get a master chief EN but was sent an ENC who had been on a DDG first, and EOOW qualified on the gas turbine plant. He had made Chief through the Recruiter quality program and returned to sea to beef up his resume' to help him go LDO. He had no background for running an engine room on an LSD.

CO15 concluded:

I had warned my ISIC that we would not do well on an Engineering Assessment due to lack of experience and some material issues. I got Zero help from the staff, and my LSD Command did not end well. To make matters worse, I was reassigned not to Norfolk near my family, but to a job in DC.

### **Sample Artifacts and Handouts**

CO15 provided no artifacts.

CO15 stated his Command Philosophy: “Do your job. Know your business. Be prepared to answer: ‘Who, what, where, why, when, how long and how much.’ Take care of the crew. Enjoy life in the Navy.”

### **Advice for Those Who Would Follow the Path to Command**

CO15 provided this advice for those who follow:

To Department Heads:

Focus on knowing ‘who, what, where, why, when, how long and how much.’

Ladies and Gentlemen. You are embarking into the middle management of the Navy. You may have thought that you knew what your DH’s did when you were a DIVO, but you did not. Nothing against you, but you were not exposed to all the information that a DH has from the CO and XO. Keep that in mind when your DIVOs do not seem to get the bigger picture. You have both the experience and the inside knowledge of the CO’s mindset, they do not. Do not get frustrated with them, just guide them. Remember you were once a dangerous Ensign. I know I was one, and I can give you a list of former COs who will agree with me that I was also one. Do not confuse enthusiasm with capability, but also harness enthusiasm and guide them to be better Officers. Do not crush their enthusiasm no matter how much they drive you crazy. If you think your DIVOs drive you nuts, I promise you make the XO more nuts. Trust me I have been in all those positions.

To those XOs:

#1 you’re the damn XO, not the PCO.

Ladies and Gentlemen. You are going into the most difficult tour in the Navy in my opinion. You have to uphold the policy and desire of the CO as long as it is

not BLATANTLY Illegal. Just because you do not agree with the CO does not give you the right not to enforce his wishes with 100% of your ability. This will be difficult. You do not believe me now, but you will run across this issue during your tour. You will have to work with the CMC, now some are good some are less than good, but open hostility between you two means the crew suffers. The most important thing as XO is to remember that you are the CO's shield. He/ She gets the credit for the good deals, you get the blame for extra working hours, duty section reduction, and a whole host of other issues. Protect your CO. That is the bottom line.

He continued in discussing the relationship between the XO and CO:

Here is a Sea Story from when I was in Command. We were doing a JTFEX off Morehead City. We had been harassed by small boats for the last couple of days. I had not gotten any sleep, vice what catnaps I could get in my chair. After about 40 hours of being on the bridge I was combat ineffective. My XO came up to me and told me "Captain, go to bed, I have this."

I told him "I have this, I am OK."

He told me that I was so tired that I was incapable of making a rational decision. I told him that I was OK. He then told me he would disregard any order I gave about ship control or weapons employment since I was so tired. I told him I was OK once again. He then told me he was going to log into the deck log how tired I was and what he said. At that point I asked him "if I was that bad?" He said "Yes," and told me to go get some sleep. I went to get some sleep. I told him to call me in 4 hours, he told me he had it and to go sleep.

Some people told me they would not stand for this level of insubordination from an XO. They would have fired him. However, after I got some sleep, I wanted to give him an award for taking care of me when I was too far gone to take care of myself.

Your call.

To the COs:

Have fun, stay calm, think of the sailors, build your officers, keep the boss happy.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Congratulations you made it to the club. All of your knowledge and experience will be tested in this tour. You may think you are ready, and you are as ready as you can be, however you are not ready. Think back to when you became a parent the first time. You did all the research, bought all the equipment, and got prepared, you thought you were ready, then the baby showed up and you learned how much you did not know. Command is the same thing. You do not know what you do not know until you are there. Not that you

are not capable or deserving; just it is such a paradigm shift from anything you ever have done that it changes you. Do not be scared, just be aware. Also remember that the CO does not get to make excuses or blame others. If you are required to fall on your sword, you accept the blame even though there may have been nothing you could do or you were sacrificed for the service. Most of all try to have fun, because if you are not having fun, no one below you is either.

### **Drawings of Relative Challenges, Experience, and Performance**

CO15 drew two cartoons to describe the differences in challenges between the eras of COs. In the first one, a JO (him), in explaining why the equipment can't be fixed soon, goes to the Captain and says, "CO, this company went out of business before I was born." The following scene shows the CO doing a "faceplant" (e.g., open hand to the forehead). In the second scenario, one of his JO's comes to him and says, "CO, we do not have enough money to buy the parts to fix the engine." And the next scene repeats the first, the CO (now him) doing a "faceplant."

### **Summary of Analyses**

CO15 was straightforward in discussing his career and not overly embittered by his Navy experience. In reviewing CO15's responses, key themes included exercising personal Initiative, being comfortable knowing You Don't Know; building the Command Philosophy; handling the impact of Internet; and asking How much do we trust?

CO15 demonstrated the *Execution* behavior "*expand your people's capabilities*" (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 57). CO15 exemplified the naval officer's quality of "*Judgment*" (Bogle & Holwitt, 2004, p. 18). CO15 demonstrated the "I" (emotional Intelligence) component of the RICH model.

CO15 earned the title of “Character” based on his outgoing personality and display of grace he exhibited throughout his career. He retired after 20 years and is now working in the private sector.

## **CO16. The Hero**

CO16 commanded a DDG 2004 to 2006 and a CG 2010 to 2011.

### **Personal Background/ Motivation**

CO16 was the son of a Navy Captain:

It seemed that all the men in my life, this is what they do: fly airplanes and command ships. In the ninth grade, I watched my father take command. I knew other ships' and air squadron COs and wanted to be like them. One of those guys was a famous aviator from the Class of '55. I had been 'raised right,' and came in wanting to command. My preparation continued at every stop. As a young officer, I worked for COs who inspired me.

### **Path to Command, Preparation, JO Experiences, Key People, Events**

CO16 discussed how he started:

When I was headed to the SWOS DOC, a now retired VADM suggested that I choose a SPRUANCE so you're operating with a strike group. But I wanted Florida, so I took an FFG. Due to some finagling between the Commandant of the Naval Academy who knew that I had done an exchange tour in Chile and the Admiral leading a South American deployment called UNITAS, I was assigned as the aide as an Ensign on the staff and worked as an interpreter. The staff rode a SPRUANCE, and I voluntarily stood bridge watches to begin banking my bridge experience.

CO16 continued:

On my first ship, and FFG in the mid-late 80's after STARK got hit, we were shifted from a MED Cruise to the MIDEAST force with a CG and two other FFGs... Our INCHOP day was the date of our attack on the Rashadat Oil Field Platforms. We did 30 Strait of Hormuz (SOH) transits while escorting tankers and on the Bridge-to-Bridge radio heard men screaming for help. We watched a 50000 Ton ship sink... It was operating in the gray zone of war. ... We had experienced missiles fly near ship. I 'took to this stuff' and the CO liked me on the bridge.

CO16 related:

I was on that ship for two and a half years. I was the CIC Officer, and we did a second deployment, just a one year turn around. On that trip, we did 20 SOH transits. It was a stark difference between the wild cruise around South America and partying, and the reality of the Tanker war in the Gulf.

CO16 discussed his early COs:

Our first CO was a gentleman, but a little lax. The second CO shifted me to DCA (Damage Control Assistant). We were facing INSURV and OPPE—the old engineering inspection—and he knew that we needed to know facts and procedures cold. I gained a tremendous education from that ship. Both COs cared and worked hard. The second one was a consummate professional, constantly engaged. It was obvious, he liked what we did. I became the OOD who trained others. I was the Sea Detail OOD, all the while adding to my bank of experience.

CO16 made choices:

The Navy wanted me to go immediately to Postgraduate School. However, I wanted to be in the early days of AEGIS. So rather than NPS, I was able to gain a billet on an AEGIS cruiser whose CO had been on the UNITAS. I grew up to be the Fire Control Officer (FCO). That work now ‘Branded’ me as an AEGIS guy—sort of like a Hornet guy, specialist in Fleet Warfighting and leading Strike Groups.

CO16 gained experience:

In July-August of 1990 when Saddam rolled into Kuwait, we were nowhere near the Gulf, but we soon deployed on 28 December. We heard the orders we’d been waiting for: ‘Make best speed.’ We ran all the way from SUEZ into the Gulf and were the only East Coast Strike Group in Desert Storm. Our ship was the Air Defense Commander (ADC); we shot TLAMs (Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles). At the end of the action, we watched the AEGIS radar track an F/A-18 into water. We were able to vector the rescue helo and recovered the pilots. We saw SCUD missiles launched at Gulf targets and cruise missiles fired at our Battleship. The Brits handled those.

He continued:

I served as the CIC DIVO, a TAO, and a Force TAO. The first XO didn’t think much of me; since I was perhaps too salty and over confident in what I was doing. But when the new XO and shortly after a new CO arrived we hit it off. They were inspirational and had a major effect on the crew. We won the Battle E and every other award you could win, except the Battenberg Cup. I was awarded the USNA Class of ‘55 Leadership award and left as the ship’s top JO.

He studied:

At Naval Postgraduate School, I studied Manpower and Personnel Management. I was bored with just studying and reading and tried to return to the Fleet rather than stay at school. But my wife talked me out of it. It was a perfect choice since every day I used that education in dealing with people and planning ahead.

His career continued:

Then I was off to Department Head School. One of the detailers told me I was the top guy in our 'Slate.' I got ordered to a cruiser that was shifting homeport to Norfolk. The ship had a great, and my most inspirational, CO, who helped ship transition. He had a 'SHTICK' and a persona that drove excellence and confidence. He always advised 'Err on side of Sailor.'

CO16 discussed his cruiser CO:

The CO was magnificent and fearless; or at least that's the way it appeared. During an early underway, there was a tug in distress off the coast. We were facing 40-60 knot winds and heavy seas. The CO demonstrated his shiphandling confidence and expertise. He showed absolutely no second thoughts. He was focused on rescuing that boat and its crew. Although the CO was unflappable, in hindsight I realize he was 'making it up as we went along.' We made a very gutsy maneuver to get the tug a line. After failing to throw our lines close enough and have the tug's crew haul them in, the CO called the BOS'N—whom I did not have much respect for since he couldn't write an Eval—and discussed his plan. He then backed our ship toward the tug until the stern sheets were just over the bow of the tug, and the BMC precisely—on time and on target—dropped the towing hawser down to the tug, and we rescued those men and that boat. I learned that the BMC really knew his business as a BOS'N, and that the CO was able to lead us anywhere.

I watched that CO root out thug like behavior that I had not picked up on. He cleaned up the ship. He employed the tools of 'Summary Courts Martial' (SCM) to augment the normal non-judicial punishment at Captain's Mast. I was assigned to conduct an SCM and awarded the subject restriction and extra duty along with forfeitures of pay. As a Lieutenant, I thought I had hammered him. The CO then helped me learn why he selected some cases to go SCMs. 'The SCM can send Sailors to jail.' That concept had never dawned on me; and the CO, in maintaining his professional integrity was appropriately hands off throughout the case. My eyes opened wider about the responsibility and authority vested in COs after that.

We did well on OPPE, well on INSURV, but stumbled badly on the Tomahawk certification. I think there was some O-6 to O-6 in-fighting. We worked up as the ADC for the final deployment of a CV. Then deployed, and as we entered Med, 'Make best speed' was the order, and we sped to a position off the Amalfi coast for TLAM shots against the Serbian forces involved in ethnic cleansing. Our ship was assigned as the backup, but the primary ship failed. Our CO was certain that we would shoot. 'Reload the software and 'Leave it alone.'- The other ship made a last minute tweak that crashed their system, and Bravo passed the order to us and we shot. We fired 13 TLAMs, and on receiving news reports the next day, many of the crew began to realize what we had done.

That CO was brilliant, ethical, and displayed pride in handling the ship. In a Fitrep debrief, in most of it, he told me what I was doing wrong and how screwed up I was, but capped it with 'I think you should go onto command.' Every Department Head went on to Command-7 for 7-and four have gone to major command. At one point, the CO wasn't getting enough sleep, so I ran a 'finishing school' for JOs on Bridge... It became another effort that added to my professional portfolio for Command.

CO16 made new choices:

As I was finishing up my tour on the CG, all my Mentors said 'Go to DC.' Instead of DC, I went to SWOS to help the Department Head Course as the AEGIS trainer and master of the simulators. I didn't screen immediately for XO, so made good progress at SWOS, and then went to an XO ride on a DDG.

CO16 discussed his XO tour:

The ship went from a 'Macho' CO to a very professional CO, who didn't have a lot of 'USS' time. So any time the ship needed handling, I was called to the bridge. We were in an ASW event in COMPTUEX making a fast transit through the Windward Passage when I had been called to the Bridge. We were speeding at 25 knots, and the Bridge team knew that something just wasn't right. Suddenly, about 100 yards ahead I made out the light from a sailboat, took the CONN, and maneuvered quickly to allow us to miss the sailboat by about 10 yards. That experience confirmed how well prepared as a shiphandler I had been.

"That DDG won two straight Battle E's." It was another ship that excelled.

CO16 was puzzled by his CO's reaction:

When I screened for CO, my current CO didn't seem to care. I got the news over a weekend when my old CO from CG called me at home to congratulate me. It was a little disappointing. As I left, it seemed like I was one of the most powerful XOs on waterfront. I was enroute then to BUPERS as a Detailer.

### **Command Experience(s)/ Challenges**

CO16 commanded a DDG 2004 to 2006 and a CG 2010 to 2011 deploying with both commands. CO16 recalled:

At BUPERS, I got my hand in cookie jar, and assigned myself to a DDG as the second CO who would do the ship's first deployment. The commissioning CO had done pre-commissioning before and knew how to get best money deals to finish the ship. The ship was well prepared ship and excellently trained in engineering. My air warfare experience added even more strength to the team.

## Challenges

CO16 discussed Command:

I had been around Captains who thought about fighting the ship and talked about it with their Wardrooms. I also had experience fighting the ship, from the Tanker wars, to Desert Storm, to Bosnia. In COMPTUEX, we did well on ASW finding a submarine. We had a great Aviation Department who flew and maintained the helo. I was comfortable maneuvering closely around the CVN. I was more lucky than good. In Gulf as we inched, the new CG dropped the entire Combat Systems load. So when asked if we were ready to take over, we answered 'Standing by' - and took it-and made it work for about 8 hours. My ADC and Carrier Strike Group (CSG) experience proved invaluable. It set the tone for who we were as a ship.

CO16 proclaimed:

We were used as the 'show ship.' And we had a spirited crew that enjoyed being good and upbeat. My CSG Commander brought over a Saudi Admiral with my commodore for a visit and rode one night. The SG Commander, a Submariner, came to bridge to observe what we did in night plane guard ops behind the CVN. 'Wow! You guys really have to do a lot!'

CO16 made new choices:

My commodore advised 'You really need to be a commodore' but I went to the Joint Staff. I knew I wanted to command a ship again; I never wanted DESRON-but wanted a cruiser. To fix timing with my family, I took another DC job with OPNAV. Those jobs may have been telling. I worked on Afghanistan policy and the new SC 21. Both projects seem to have petered out.

CO16 reflected on his choices:

After that, I was sent to a cruiser that had fallen on hard times since I had served on it in the 1990's. My Strike Group (SG) Commander called during my pipeline and asked 'How early can you get here?' Based on my schools, I thought June. But we cancelled some schools, moved the date, and I took Command in January. We faced INSURV in May and would be the ADC for the next deploying SG. As I surmised my new command, it was surreal. The magnificent ship I remembered when it was new, was now 22 years old and looked awful with over half the light bulbs burned out. Although it had only four CASREPs, I had 100 fewer sailors than when I served on it 20 years earlier. My boss told me I could fire the CHENG and XO. I didn't right away, and it turned out they were able to do their jobs with right direction and leadership. My XO had been away from sea for 7 years and had volunteered to return to fill a critical at sea position. The CHENG

kept plugging away. We did have a strong CMC who was experienced and led via leading. He had been a 3M Coordinator and a VF CMC.

CO16 was surprised by the shape of his new ship:

We discovered 10 of 16 consoles in CIC were out of service; and most buttons on the CO's console were missing. An operationally savvy LDO noticed I'd been in CIC a while and said, 'You've already been in Combat more than your predecessor.'

CO16 related:: "As we progressed, the crew was beginning to buy the Command

Philosophy: Mission-Training-Lead-Family. He continued:

We first had to face a 3M inspection. We did an assist visit and failed 50 of 50 spot checks. I went to have a talk with the Supply Officer who led the 3M inspection team who probably wasn't visited by a lot of Cruiser Captains. I told him we knew we were in extremis facing this hurdle along a very challenging path to deployment with the CSG. He made some key suggestions; we went back to basics, and employed tough love. The CMC had the CPO mess lined up [I am not always impressed by Chief's messes but when led and challenged, they can do well and motivate their people.] We managed to 'Pass' the 3M Inspection with all departments getting passable marks. The CPO mess became stronger. The CO of ATG called me and told me if we hadn't changed the instruction, we would have failed. My retort was something like 'I'm CO of a cruiser and you are still CO of ATG. It sucks to be you and they still call me 'Captain'.'

CO16 thought about how to relate to his crew:

I had heard that interviewing the crew personally could improve buy in. I started from the top and interviewed the crew one by one. I got through about two thirds of them. By then, we had complete 'buy in' and began to 'hum.'

CO16 spoke on priorities:

We needed to clean the ship before we ever could think about true excellence. I implemented 'Clampdown' and told the XO that we need O's and CPOs to lead it and the E6 to be involved. I gave them a few days to get it going, but my first checks resulted in an explosion. As I was out 'MBWA' I found the Wardroom full of DIVOs and Department Heads. I chased them out and proceeded through Officer's Country kicking everyone out of their staterooms. I was headed to the Chief's Quarters next, but Intel had gotten to the mess and the CPOs had gotten out to their spaces to be with their Sailors.

CO16 disclosed: “Standards simply needed to get higher. Moreover, the Crew wanted to be led; they didn’t like being screwed up. But it wasn’t happening easily.” As the following incident shows:

Just before the engineering inspection, I got a late night call at home with the report that about ‘70 gallons’ of Lube Oil had drained into the bilges. [And we know the first report... it’s not 70, it’s more... ]. But we worked to get the story; it was a lot more than 70 closer to 1000 and began recovery with two small air operated pumps. Later I got a call the ‘wizbangs weren’t working- [and I thought, ‘Does anything on this ship work?'] They kept at it and got it cleaned up.

CO16 admitted:

I thought it would be too hard for crew if we fired folks or took them to Mast over that issue. We worked to find out what went wrong and learned why we have to follow the whole procedure all the time. Most struggling officers are ‘not that bad.’ They need good leadership and to learn what ‘Meeting Standards’ means. We were starting to get clean and more light bulbs were on than off, or in that Fluorescent lamp blinking mode.

CO16 disclosed:

The CLASSRON Commodore called and asked jokingly, ‘How does it feel to Command of worst cruiser in the U.S. Navy’-those words stung. I became even more determined. I went to see the leader of the Engineering Certification Team (ENG CERT). He told me that he could create an assist team to conduct an assist visit over the weekend. We did well and more folks began to see that we could pass the upcoming inspection. I was prepared to hold the inspection off until Friday to allow us more time to prep, but the Engineers wanted it Wednesday, not Friday. They surprised even themselves. We got an ‘Above Average’ and passed every evolution and drill. The news of successful ENG CERT- passed through the ship. The crew was beginning to do what it was supposed to be doing and recognizing it.

CO16 continued:

From then it became ‘All INSURV all the time.’ The TYCOM didn’t seem to care- but we worked anyway. We had the smallest number of any cruiser crew in the Navy. We knew we had a goal, but I wanted to allow some breathing room. We let up for a week. I had seen my previous COs do this on occasions. We then started hard and kept going. The crew was qualifying and was able to remain in six duty sections. We adjusted working hours slightly. We started the workday 15 minutes earlier, but I gave Department Heads control over liberty. Over the next few quarters, we would pick the Saturdays we would work, and stuck to

them. We had clearly defined daily and weekly goals. I had offered the 3-day weekend that would occur the week before INSURV- that if we met the benchmarks- we could take it. I explained that it was not just about INSURV, but about us getting millions of dollars to ensure we could deploy with CSG. We stuck to our word about working hours and liberty. The crew kept working, took the 3-day weekend, and got slowly better, and as we continued, we began to get better faster.

CO16 demonstrated how he did it:

I did a stem to stern walkthrough and was throwing stuff out of fan rooms, once accidentally hitting the CHENG, but the crew was coming together. As the ship was cleaned, Sailors would ask me 'Captain, is this a clean ship.' And I would answer, 'Yes, this is a clean ship.' The CMC asked me what I thought the crew liked about me. 'That I make them clean and fix things and make their lives miserable when they don't?' No, you pin your door open. It just seemed natural.

CO16 noted it was not all rosy even then:

We had some troubles during INSURV and the Chief Inspector told me 'we could put 'not demonstrated' which to me was tantamount to failing; so I repositioned the ship for a Gunshoot early the next morning. As the BMOC announced 'sunrise'- I heard 'Boom' 48 times.' INSURV found us 'Able to carry out duties assigned.' Success built success. By then we knew the Ship was clean, the crew was fired up. When the Senior inspector told me we passed,- I almost wept. 'I had been on this ship a few years ago,-I was very surprised how well you did.'

CO16 continued:

That was Friday. At the Warfare CDRs Conference on Monday, the Admiral turned what could easily have been a contentious group into a Band of Brothers. We sailed that way. We had a good COMPTUEX, changed Bosses, and I taught the crew on the real reason why we are there- 'to protect the CVN.'

CO16 disclosed:

We deployed to Fifth Fleet. While there, we were assigned to counter-piracy observations. One of the toughest things was when we stopped an act in progress on the S/V QUEST. The Special Forces unit was unable to free the hostages before they were killed. We observed the incident but could take no clear action to intervene before it was too late. I called for counseling following QUEST mission failure. The Counselors would have been rejected by my XO and DHs who were trying to maintain their dignity; but I countermanded and was first to sit down with the trauma experts. The ship and crew could have gone into a depressing swoon, but came to realize that 'Even in disappointing failure, this is

what we do- and sometimes we do not carry the day. You only understand Command if you've had command.'

CO16 led the recovery:

We continued the mission and liberated two ships. Through our size and determination, we intimidated some pirates into surrendering.

CO16 still had challenges:

My darkest day in command occurred just before we pulled in from that deployment. A Sailor was hurt badly during an UNREP accident. And you know the story of the accident. We are alongside, just hooked up, and the first—e.g., bad—report came in, 'a Sailor's hurt....he cut his hand- ...followed later by 'it's not a not a him, it's a her- ... and she was hit in the head... and then ...and it's really bad.' Luckily, my HM1 was being relieved by another IDC (Independent Duty Corpsman) so we had two EMTs on board. My aviators had observed the commotion and could see the Sailor needed advanced help. Without any prompting, they had rolled their plane out of the hangar and were preflighting it-in case. As soon as we cleared from the UNREP and the patient was ready, we got her in the air and to a hospital for life saving surgery. She is maimed but recovering.

CO16 summed it up: "Because of who you are and how you are leading, the crew begins to do the right things."

### **Practices**

CO16 thought:

There was a Sea change in difference of challenge. My first CG cruiser COs' had time and space to worry about who was senior and who was parking where on the pier. I had 100 fewer Sailors, with as good leaders and experienced Chiefs and First Class until they developed. Additionally, the shore support infrastructure was gutted. No SIMAs, on older ships, we were just trying to keep the ship together. Plus we were maintaining AT/FP postures.

CO16 praised the sailors: "Luckily, today's Sailors are better, more sophisticated." But still:

It is a tough time to command. I kept using 'MBWA' techniques and listened to the Sailor talk. My CG CO used to spend time in the Ship's store. You get a good sense of what's going on in the Galley. I had developed a good people

sense from being around ships and Sailors at sea. I worked DH's hard on their 8 o'clock reports- when would this gizmo be returned to service?

"I always tried to explain WHY when things changed."

### **Accomplishments/ Disappointments**

CO16 recalled:

I was able to raise the level of performance on both ships and kept the crews focused on mission. I had a couple of meltdowns, but recovered quickly. It can all work, but a true picture of readiness first comes from understanding standards. I would always start with cleanliness, the PMS and qualifications.

On the Cruiser, we went from the "worst CG" to the Battle E and the Surface Force's nominee for the Battenberg Cup, awarded as a symbol of operational excellence within the Atlantic Fleet.

CO16 reflected: "The difference of the CO- not sure how you pick them- but the right CO makes a huge difference in ship's performance and confidence....On the cruiser, we were not complete heroes after the S/V Quest incident. And it's never helpful when a Sailor gets hurt."

### **Sample Artifacts and Handouts**

CO16 did not provide any artifacts from command.

### **Advice for Those Who Would Follow the Path to Command**

CO16 left this advice for those following:

To Department Heads:

Command is worth every bit of blood, sweat, and tears. If you make it- Great, enjoy the journey, relish it. If you don't, you'll be a better person for having been into the arena. If you're not interested, I wonder why you are doing what we do. When you make it, cherish every second.

To XOs:

#1 you're the damn XO, not the PCO. I am not sure I like the Fleet up process. Do not undermine your CO, but stand up when he won't.

Remember the CO is lonely. Take care of CO. Invite on liberty, a CO who respects the officers will not force his wardroom to go with him. Tell him when he screws up. Use tact and judgment. Prepare to take command- err on the side of sailors.

To the COs:

'Man up' to say it's not safe-cherish your time. Err on the side of sailors. Be ready for the fight- stamina. Your time will be gone before you know it. Have a passion for command.

### **Drawings of Relative Challenges, Experience, and Performance**

As CO16 drew his graphs, he noted that the job was "Way harder now." He showed two boxes, the second box easily absorbed the first (early CO's) box. He showed his ship followed the basic path for the FRTP. And indicated a "steady improvement" with some high rate of improvements as they finished milestones. He was surprised that visitors remarked, "The crew seems so happy." Success builds success. As we began to do things right, more things positively happened. We began to establish an identity of being a squared away ship.

### **Summary of Analyses**

CO16's responses developed two themes: the effect of personal choice and the importance of a mentor who is also a model. I chose to get to sea and be on the bridge. As a young officer, I worked for COs who inspired me. "I 'took to this stuff' and the CO liked me on the bridge." Contrast that effect with a mentor who was not a model: "As XO, I was disappointed by my CO who never acknowledged my selection for Command." Since this study's population was composed of ship's COs, the focus on

attaining commanding ships rather than becoming a commander of COs of ships streamed through. “My commodore advised ‘You really need to be a commodore’ but I went to the Joint Staff. I knew I wanted to command a ship again; I never wanted DESRON.”

CO16 demonstrated the *Execution* behavior “*Set clear goals and priorities*” (Bossidy & Charan, 2002, p. 57). CO16 exemplified the naval officer’s quality of “*firmness*” (Bogle & Holwitt, 2004, p. 18). CO16 demonstrated the “R” (Realistic optimism) component of the RICH model.

CO16 represented those who have succeeded by persevering in the face of many difficulties. He brought a ship from below standards to be recognized as the best. He is the Hero.