



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
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29 Oct 24

From: Chief of Naval Operations
To: Prospective Commanding Officer

Ref: (a) 10 U.S.C. §5947
(b) U.S. Navy Regulations (1990)
(c) America's Warfighting Navy (Jan 2024)
(d) Navigation Plan for America's Warfighting Navy (Sep 2024)
(e) Get Real, Get Better (Jan 2022)
(f) Culture of Excellence 2.0 (Mar 2024)
(g) Mental Health Playbook (Jul 2023)

Subj: CHARGE OF COMMAND

Congratulations on your selection to serve in the position of highest honor and greatest responsibility in our Navy: Command. Your selection to be a Commanding Officer is based on your proven performance and comes with the expectation that you will lead with **integrity, courage, and humility**. References (a) and (b) detail the key laws and regulations that both empower and bind Commanding Officers. References (c) through (g) provide my vision and priorities for our Navy, as well as standards and tools that will help you and your team deliver warfighting advantage. You should be familiar with these references prior to assuming command and refer to them often throughout your tour.

The world today is a more volatile and dangerous place that I can recall in the entirety of my 39 years of service. The threats to our Nation and our interests are real and growing, as is the potential for near-term crises and conflicts. **View everything you do through a warfighting lens and be ready to fight and win in combat.** On Day One, you assume **absolute ownership** for leading and building the great people, great leaders, and great teams that will deter our adversaries, respond effectively in crisis, and win decisively in war. As the Commanding Officer, it is your solemn responsibility to lead your team in combat or in support of combat, when called.

In both peacetime and in war, success requires individuals and teams to **connect their dot** – to connect the work they do every day – to the mission. It is **your** job to help them understand their role **and** see how critical they are to our Navy team. Unquestionably, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Strong and resilient teams succeed. **A culture of dignity and respect is non-negotiable.**

As the Commander, you will inherit people, platforms, and problems. At some point, you will turn the same over to your successor. Be a steward of your limited resources, solve problems where you can, elevate barriers when necessary, and act decisively on the challenges that undercut our safety, readiness, and resilience. **Embrace the red.** Create a climate for yourself and for your command that fearlessly adopts a mindset of constant self-assessment, self-correction, and learning. Make it a routine habit to perform your own self-assessment. Be ready to learn and grow in this tour, alongside your shipmates. Encourage and be open to receiving feedback, and constructively provide it to others.

Risk is Commander's business. I entrust you to understand and manage the risk associated with your mission and assigned forces. **Clear, frequent, and transparent** communication between you and your Boss, and you and the Sailors and Civilians in your charge is absolutely essential to achieving mission success and building trust. **Empower your team** with the ethos of Mission Command and

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overcommunicate your Commander's intent. Imbue your command with a warfighting culture characterized by a knowledgeable team that trusts each other and completely owns their mission and their platform.

As I highlighted in *America's Warfighting Navy and Navigation Plan 2024*, we are the **world's pre-eminent fighting force**. We are here to **preserve the peace, respond in crisis, and win decisively in war**. Our Nation and the American people are counting on us to deter aggression, protect our Nation's security and prosperity, and preserve our way of life. As we are seeing today in the Red Sea, you must prepare yourself and your teams to perform at their greatest mental, physical, and moral strength – both when expected and, more importantly, when unexpected. This will demand your and your crew's utmost focus and effort. As the Commanding Officer, you set the example for others to follow – **be steadfast in every storm**. Take care of your teammates and their families, and always look for opportunities to do the things that only YOU can do to make things better for your team. Take care of yourself and do things you need to do to preserve yourself and keep yourself refreshed. You can't be the leader your teams deserve if **you** are not at your best!

While in Command, you need to continually focus on what matters: **integrity, people, teamwork, professional and warfighting excellence, and safety matter, every day**. As you face adversity, *which you will*, remember that a winning attitude makes all the difference, and it starts from the top. Command can be a lonely place, but know that you are never alone, and someone else has already experienced every challenge you will encounter. I encourage you to build and demonstrate strong relationships with your Executive Officer and Command Master Chief, as well as the other Commanding Officers in your area. We are **all** stronger together.

It is in the tough times that leadership really matters, and **I am counting on you to lead!** As Admiral McRaven once said, "The essence of leadership is the courage to make the tough decisions, take risks, and accept responsibility, whatever the consequences." Seize this mantle of leadership and build on the legacy of the great Navy leaders who have gone before you.

I congratulate you on this extraordinary achievement and charge you to conduct yourself every day in a manner worthy of the responsibility entrusted to you.

I am proud to serve alongside you. I thank you and your families for your continued commitment to ensuring that our Navy is always ready. Let's drive forward together with purpose and urgency – there is no time to waste! **ALL AHEAD FLANK!**



LISA M. FRANCHETTI
Admiral, U.S. Navy
33rd Chief of Naval Operations

Date

I have read and understand the above letter.

Prospective Commanding Officer