Reflections on Reading

John E. Jackson
The U.S. Naval War College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol68/iss4/27

This Reflections on Reading is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.
Coming Soon to Your Command’s Library: How We Fight

Professor John E. Jackson of the Naval War College is the program manager for the Chief of Naval Operations Professional Reading Program.

The Chief of Naval Operations Professional Reading Program (CNO-PRP) recently began distributing How We Fight: Handbook for the Naval Warfighter to all CNO-PRP libraries around the fleet. In describing the 166-page, full-color handbook, Admiral Jonathan Greenert, USN, says in his foreword:

“How We Fight” is a concise, single volume that explains the basic, unique, and enduring attributes associated with being a Sailor, going to sea, and conducting war at sea. It highlights the fundamentals of the environment in which the Navy operates, our uniquely maritime characteristics, our history in this domain, and the way of Navy warfighting. This book should serve as a companion piece to other sources of literature enabling Sailors to understand the essence of being “a Sailor” as they develop their skills as seagoing professionals.

The introduction to the handbook further explains its purpose:

Every Sailor is a warfighter first. The U.S. Navy exists to protect our nation and our access to the world. Our duty is to prevent and deter wars and, if necessary, fight and win them. The protection we provide the American people extends far beyond our homeland and includes the defense of our national interests and allies.

As a Service, the Navy is unique in that its continuing maintenance—directed by the U.S. Constitution—reflects the fact that our nation’s economic prosperity is based in a large part on international trade in products and resources, the majority of which travels by sea. We protect that access every day in peacetime. In conflict, we are dedicated to victory.

Those are facts we all know. We also know that our Navy is designed to operate forward in the far regions of the world. Much of our time, both in peace and conflict, is spent on deployment in the areas of potential crises, promoting, safeguarding and,
when required, defeating an enemy and restoring the peace. We protect American interests on a global basis, something with which we are very familiar.

We know that we must “be ready”—fully prepared to conduct warfighting operations while forward deployed into regions of potential crisis and conflict.

[The purpose of this book] is simple—to articulate in a single volume the elements that determine the way we operate, as well as some of the overall concepts that guide our methods. We are shaped by so many factors: the maritime environment, our Service attributes, our history, and our current and projected future missions.

These are the factors we examine in these pages. The book is meant to put all these pieces together and define who we are and what we do in a comprehensive, yet readable fashion. For some, it is a good review of material they have long known. For others, it may hold ideas with which they are not as familiar or have never examined intently. For civilian readers, it helps to explain what the U.S. Navy is truly about: what it does for our nation, what molds its culture, and what makes it unique among our joint U.S. Armed Forces.

The CNO-PRP managers at the Naval War College will ensure that a number of hard copies are made available to every ship, squadron, and major activity in the Navy for inclusion in their CNO-PRP lending libraries. An electronic (e-book, ISBN 978-1-935352-42-6) version will be available for download from the official Navy website at www.navy.mil and from the CNO-PRP website at navyreading.dodlive.mil. Command procurement officials can purchase additional hard copies (ISBN 978-1-935352-41-9) from the Government Publishing Office (GPO) bookstore at bookstore.gpo.gov. Individuals (including private citizens) who desire to add this book to their professional libraries may purchase copies from GPO using personal funds.

We strongly encourage everyone to read How We Fight: Handbook for the Naval Warfighter. It tells a story of honor, courage, and commitment that spans the centuries and provides a vision for the future.

JOHN E. JACKSON