

2021

Reflections on Reading

The U.S. Naval War College

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Recommended Citation

Naval War College, The U.S. (2021) "Reflections on Reading," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 74 : No. 2 , Article 18.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol74/iss2/18>

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REFLECTIONS ON READING

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

Since 2006, the President of the Naval War College has functioned as the executive agent for the Chief of Naval Operations Professional Reading Program (CNO-PRP). The dean of the College of Distance Education has provided oversight, with this author serving as the program manager. (The Reflections on Reading article that appeared in the Winter 2021 issue of the *Naval War College Review* detailed how a new slate of book titles was generated recently for the CNO's consideration.) After a review of recommendations and the incorporation of additional input, on 23 February 2021 CNO Admiral Michael M. Gilday, USN, released his update to the CNO-PRP. The updated book list can be found on the CNO-PRP website at www.navy.mil/CNO-Professional-Reading-Program. Portions of the following text are adapted from the Navy press release that announced the launch of the new program.

The goal of the program is to help sailors extend their personal and professional development beyond their primary designators and ratings. "It is critically important for our Navy to be a learning organization," said Gilday. "One of the very best ways to do that is to foster an environment where every Sailor deepens their level of understanding, learning, and leadership skills. That's why this book list is so important. . . . Make no mistake, to outthink our competitors today, we must study and apply lessons we've learned from our past."

With a motto of "Read well to lead well," this updated reading list aims to do the following:

- Enhance professionalism and improve critical thinking skills
- Foster a deep appreciation for naval and military history and heritage
- Increase knowledge of joint war fighting and strengthen sailors' ability to make sound judgments

- Develop a greater appreciation of the views of others and a better understanding of our changing world
- Encourage discussion about the maritime profession and the ever-evolving role of sea power in this day and age

The CNO-PRP list includes fifty-three titles organized into four key lines of effort: Readiness, Capabilities, Capacity, and Sailors. Additionally, the works are subdivided into tiers—foundational, advanced, and capstone—indicating which books are most appropriate during the various stages of a sailor’s career.

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Russell Smith identified twenty-one additional books as suggested reading. “Reading is a fundamental staple in the growth and development of any leader,” said Smith. “For this list, the titles included were methodically chosen in order to provide a specific focus on targeted areas for reinforcement, a focus that will provide enlisted Sailors the greatest benefit given our role in the organization. A focus on team dynamics, seeking innovative solutions, leveraging the incredible strengths inherent in the diversity of our enlisted force, and the virtues of altruistic service to a cause greater than ourselves—these are the things that enable the enlisted force to execute the vision of our commanders, leading to unit success and our Navy prevailing in combat when called upon.”

Together, the CNO and MCPON lists offer a variety of writing categories and genres. They include works of fiction and nonfiction, and span topics ranging from the expressly military to strategy, management, technology, and more.

Most of the seventy-four books are available at no cost to sailors in both e-book and digital-audio formats from the Navy MWR digital library collection. Directions on how to sign up for an account and access these books are available at the CNO-PRP website, and eligible patrons can download the books at www.navymwrdigitallibrary.org.

By design, some of the recommended books may be considered a bit controversial. Gilday has written, “While I do not endorse every viewpoint of the books on this reading list, I believe exposure to varied ideas improves the critical thinking skills of our sailors.”

The fifty-three titles in the CNO’s portion of the newly revised, fifth iteration of the CNO-PRP and their respective authors are as follows:

<i>Army of None</i>	Paul Scharre
<i>Artificial Intelligence Basics</i>	Tom Taulli
<i>A Brief Guide to Maritime Strategy</i>	James R. Holmes
<i>Burn-In</i>	P. W. Singer and August Cole
<i>The Character Gap</i>	Christian Miller

<i>Deep Thinking</i>	Garry Kasparov
<i>The Dichotomy of Leadership</i>	Jocko Willink and Leif Babin
<i>Ego Is the Enemy</i>	Ryan Holiday
<i>The End of Grand Strategy</i>	Simon Reich and Peter Dombrowski
<i>Fearless</i>	Eric Blehm
<i>Fed Up</i>	Gemma Hartley
<i>The Fifth Domain</i>	Richard A. Clarke and Robert K. Knake
<i>The Fleet at Flood Tide</i>	James D. Hornfischer
<i>Fleet Tactics and Coastal Combat</i>	Wayne P. Hughes Jr.
<i>Fortune Favors Boldness</i>	Barry M. Costello
<i>The Future of Violence</i>	Benjamin Wittes and Gabriella Blum
<i>The Future of War</i>	Lawrence Freedman
<i>Genius Weapons</i>	Louis A. Del Monte
<i>Ghost Fleet</i>	P. W. Singer and August Cole
<i>The (Honest) Truth about Dishonesty</i>	Dan Ariely
<i>How to Be an Antiracist</i>	Ibram X. Kendi
<i>Human Compatible</i>	Stuart Russell
<i>The Inevitable</i>	Kevin Kelly
<i>The Infinite Game</i>	Simon Sinek
<i>Just and Unjust Wars</i>	Michael Walzer
<i>The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors</i>	James D. Hornfischer
<i>The Leader's Bookshelf</i>	James Stavridis and R. Manning Ancell
<i>Leaders Eat Last</i>	Simon Sinek
<i>Matterhorn</i>	Karl Marlantes
<i>Military Ethics</i>	George Lucas
<i>Mindset</i>	Carol S. Dweck
<i>Neptune's Inferno</i>	James D. Hornfischer
<i>The New Jim Crow</i>	Michelle Alexander
<i>The New Rules of War</i>	Sean McFate
<i>The Next 100 Years</i>	George Friedman

<i>No Ordinary Disruption</i>	Richard Dobbs et al.
<i>No Pity</i>	Joseph P. Shapiro
<i>One Nation under Drones</i>	John E. Jackson
<i>Our Robots, Ourselves</i>	David A. Mindell
<i>The Perfect Weapon</i>	David E. Sanger
<i>Red Star over the Pacific</i>	Toshi Yoshihara and James R. Holmes
<i>The Road to Character</i>	David Brooks
<i>Sea Power</i>	James Stavridis
<i>Seapower</i>	Geoffrey Till
<i>The Second Most Powerful Man in the World</i>	Phillips Payson O'Brien
<i>Sexual Minorities and Politics</i>	Jason Pierceson
<i>Six Frigates</i>	Ian W. Toll
<i>Start with Why</i>	Simon Sinek
<i>A Tactical Ethic</i>	Dick Couch
<i>Tiny Habits</i>	B. J. Fogg
<i>Toward a New Maritime Strategy</i>	Peter D. Haynes
<i>We Can't Talk about That at Work!</i>	Mary-Frances Winters
<i>What It Is like to Go to War</i>	Karl Marlantes

The next Reflections article will highlight the twenty-one books in the MCPON's suggested reading list. As the CNO and MCPON say: "Read well to lead well"!

JOHN E. JACKSON