CHAPTER NINE

Service Identity and Joint Warfighting

The Armed Forces of the United States consist of five military Services—the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard. In the 21st century, the days of any Service operating as a truly independent actor are long since past. The five Services fight together as a team, which means they must plan and train as a team. That does not mean that all five play equal parts in every battle or exercise. It does mean that the five are partners in the overall business of defending the United States, its territory, population, and national interests, and, therefore, that the best each Service has to offer must be woven into every battle, exercise, and plan. There can be no "lone wolves" among the five Services, because our security cannot afford free agents. When the Nation is threatened, the *Navy* doesn't go to war, nor does the *Army*; the *Nation* goes to war, using all its Services' capabilities in the combination that best suits the particular threat posed and the war plan designed to defeat it.

While "jointness" has become the short-hand description for this five-Service partnership (with its own "color"—purple), there is another way to characterize the relationship among the Services, one with deep roots in American history and political culture: *E pluribus unum*—From many, one. Inscribed on the banner held in the beak of the eagle on the Great Seal of the United States, approved by Congress on June 20, 1782, those words convey the reality that out of the original 13 colonies, one Nation emerged. The 13 new states kept their own identities, as well as their own local customs, food preferences, accents, and so forth, but together they constituted one Nation that was not just the sum of the 13, but greater than the combined total.

So, too, from five Services comes the one entity—the Armed Forces of the United States—charged with the defense of the Nation.

Tradition and identity, including uniforms and customs, matter, as do the requirements generated by the distinctive roles the various Services perform; the requirements involved in operating and fighting on land, at sea, in the air, in space, and in the cyber realm; and the different capabilities they bring to the battle. Thus, the Services keep their separate traditions and identities, their distinctive uniforms and customs; but out of the five of them emerges a single armed force that, because of the synergies among them, is greater, more flexible, and more capable than the mere sum of the five.

This book is all about being an officer in the Armed Forces of the United States in the 21st century. That involves being an officer in the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, or Coast Guard, while also being an officer in something larger—the Armed Forces of the United States. Being a fully effective officer, both in one Service and in the Armed Forces, requires knowing one's own Service well, including its capabilities and limitations, and knowing the other Services well enough to appreciate their strengths and weaknesses, what they bring to the fight, and how their capabilities can best mesh with those of the other Services.

Each Service has its own uniforms, customs, and traditions. On a deeper level, each has its own culture. It is *culture* that defines and describes any organization best. It also best defines and describes what it means to be a member of that organization. As used here, culture is taken to have two meanings: on the organizational level, how this Service defines and sees itself; and, on the individual level, what it means to be a Soldier, Marine, Sailor, Airman, or Coastguardsman.

Thus, this chapter's contribution to understanding what it means to be an officer in the Armed Forces is to capture, albeit in snapshot style, what it means to be an officer in each of the five Services. To that end, we present five short essays written by former Service chiefs, each of whom describes what it means to be an officer in that Service.

The U.S. Army, by General George W. Casey, Jr., USA (Ret.), Chief of Staff, 2007–2011

To be an Army officer means that you are a leader. You bear the sacred responsibility of leading men and women in the most demanding of all human endeavors—ground combat. Their very lives depend on you. So it's no wonder that we invest so heavily in the development of our officers, warrant officers, noncommissioned officers, and civilians.

Three traits—*vision*, *courage*, and *character*—will form the essence of effective military leaders in the years ahead.

Vision. The primary function of any leader is to point the way ahead. This requires the ability to "see around corners"—to see something significant about the future that isn't readily apparent to others. The more volatile and the more ambiguous the environment, the harder it is for leaders to come to grips with the situation themselves—let alone articulate a clear way ahead. Today's volatile environments become invitations for inaction—people become befuddled by the complexity and uncertainty and don't act. So in today's environments, it is even more important for leaders to provide a clear vision to drive their organizations' actions.

The Number One question any commander should ask is: "What are we really trying to accomplish?" The higher in the organization one is, the more complex issues become, and the harder it is to answer that question clearly and succinctly. Senior leaders must get clarity in their own minds so they can clearly articulate to subordinates how they see things and what they want their subordinates to do. Nothing gets clearer when it leaves higher headquarters and begins trickling down through the many layers of the chain of command. If it isn't clear coming from the top, the poor Soldier on the ground doesn't have a chance.

Effective action begins with a clear statement of what needs to be accomplished. The clearer the commander can be, the better the subordinates will execute—even if this concept is not exactly right. Without a clear focus, there is no common purpose, and without common purpose, there isn't effective execution. In war that is fatal. The clearer leaders can be about what they want to accomplish, the better their organizations will execute in the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity of today's global environment.

Courage. Developing and articulating a clear view of the future in today's increasingly complex environments is hard work for a lot of reasons, but most importantly because it demands that leaders make judgments about the future— something that, because we are human, always entails risk. We could be wrong, and there could be significant consequences.

That's why it takes courage to lead—and it always has. Nothing good happens without risk, and it takes courage to act in the face of uncertainty and risk. And to succeed you must act.

Leaders must think things through, speak their minds, take action, and if they make a mistake—which we all will—must be resilient enough to adapt and bounce back. Acting is more important than not being wrong.

Character. Our 26th President, Theodore Roosevelt, stated, "Alike for the nation and the individual, the one indispensable requisite is character." He was talking about the positive mental and moral qualities distinct to an individual.

Leaders with strong values build strong organizations. In the Army, because the stakes are so high, we place significant emphasis on building character. From the day Soldiers enter Basic Training, the Seven Army Values are instilled in them—Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage. These values form the basis for morally strong and ethical Soldiers and leaders. They form the core of our leaders' character.

Character is most important in the leader. People trust men and women of character because they know that they will do the right thing for the organization and not themselves when the going gets tough; and that trust becomes the glue that binds organizations together.

Writing around 340 BC, Aristotle stated that moral goodness (character) is the result of habit. If you do good things repeatedly, you will be a good person. I found that to be true over my 41-year career. As I made decisions as a young officer on simple (in retrospect) matters, I developed the habit of doing what I thought was best for the organization I was serving and acting with conviction—something that prepared me for the very difficult choices I had to make as the commander in Iraq and Army Chief of Staff. Good character is essential, and building it starts early. Acting with conviction builds credibility.

Being a leader is the essence of being an Army officer. Vision, courage, and character are the traits that will make Army officers successful in the 21st century.

The U.S. Marine Corps, by General James T. Conway, USMC (Ret.), Commandant, 2006–2010

During World War I, General John J. Pershing recognized the superior bearing and discipline of Marine units, asking frequently, "Why in Hell cant [sic] the Army do it if the Marines can; they are all the same kind of men, why cant [sic] they be like Marines?"[1] The general's question was entirely logical in 1918—and seemingly would be as valid today. Marines and other U.S. Servicemembers come from the same towns, suburbs, and cities. They are all products of the same American culture and generally share the same values. Their officers graduate from the same campuses and swear identical oaths to the Constitution—so how divergent can they be? Let there be no doubt, Marines and their officers *are* different.

It starts with the Corps' culture, which has immediate and lasting impact on every man and woman who has earned the right to wear the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor. From the earliest days at Parris Island, San Diego, or the hills of Quantico, Marines are taught instantaneous obedience to orders, the importance of the mission as the highest priority, and the value of the team over the individual. They are taught that of all character traits, *integrity* is by far the most important—both on and off the battlefield.

The training is also different and is incredibly physical. Legendary football coach Vince Lombardi's admonition to his Green Bay Packers team—"Fatigue makes cowards of us all!"—is growled daily by drill instructors as if to ward off evil spirits in hardening bodies. Weapons proficiency and marksmanship build esteem and confidence. Not least, Marines absorb the rich history and traditions of the Corps, and are taught that perhaps the greatest sin in life would be to somehow tarnish the legacy of those Marines who have gone before.

For officers the training is, if anything, even more physical. It has to be, because the role of the officer in the Fleet Marine Forces is to think ahead when everyone else is sucking wind. In some professions

the colloquialism is "never let them see you sweat." For the officer of Marines, it is "*always* let them see you sweat."

Officers learn the hard skills of their trade, the sophisticated nuances of their chosen military occupational specialty (MOS), and how to apply "tough love" to their Marines. They quickly see that in the best units officers and enlisted push each other, with each reveling in the success of the other.

The average age of Marines is dramatically younger than in the other Services. The mission requires it. But the difference also lends itself to the concept of father-to-son/teacher-to-student relationships. Marine officers welcome the respect that comes with their rank and responsibility, but work to ensure that respect is returned in full to those down the chain of command—from staff noncommissioned officers (NCOs), who are the backbone of any organization, to NCOs who will lead small units into battle, and finally to troops who will do the "heavy lifting."

Throughout their time in uniform, be it 3 years or 30, Marines relish the challenges associated with "doing more with less," and those challenges are many. Budgets are invariably tight, and conditions on bases and stations are Spartan in comparison to our brother Services. But the analogy does not end there. Marines realize that when war comes, the role of the Corps will be like that of the Spartans in the Greek phalanx—at the point of the spear or facing the most capable enemy. *Esprit de Corps* and a sense of elitism grow well in such an environment and breed conviction amongst all ranks that their word is their bond, that a handshake with a fellow Marine is more binding than a signature, and that if the worst happens, "I've got your back."

In the final analysis, Marine officers are different from their peers in the other Services for four reasons. First, every Marine officer during entry-level training—whether a pilot, logistician, or lawyer—is drilled for 6 months on how to command a Marine rifle platoon. Those basic combat skills are particularly invaluable today when the enemy can be anywhere and linear battle lines no longer exist.

Second, every officer, regardless of MOS, has a singleness of purpose: To enable, support, or lead grim-faced 19-year-old Lance Corporals so that they can destroy the Nation's enemies. Everything else in the Corps is secondary to that primary function.

Third, a Marine officer has a tremendous sense of the Corps' history and therefore a personal responsibility to maintain the legacy of his or her unit. The officer is driven by a resolute belief that if there is ever to be calamity, it will not happen on his or her watch!

Fourth, Marine officers have every confidence that they will be deployed into some God-forsaken patch of earth where they and the unit will have to adapt and overcome both the environment and the enemy. It is the nature of an amphibious or expeditionary force—and fortune favors those who have prepared themselves, mentally and physically, for uncertainty.

And yes, there is perhaps a fifth difference: All Marine officers, on active duty and for the rest of their lives, treasure that they have had the opportunity to lead some of the finest young men and women America has ever produced—those who wear the uniform of United States Marines.

The U.S. Navy, by Admiral Gary Roughead, USN (Ret.), Chief of Naval Operations, 2007–2011

The history of the military Services and their inspiring narratives are written in epic battles and accounts of extraordinary heroism and great sacrifice in time of war. The U.S. Navy is no different. But the history of the Navy and its foundations are found both in war, where it has fought and won our Nation's wars, and in peace, where it continues to ensure the international flow of resources and goods that determine the prosperity of our country. Whether in peace or war, the U.S. Navy is the Service that is always forward on the sea-lanes of the world, in places where our national interests and those of our allies and like-minded countries exist. It is the enduring, persistent, and consequential global mission of the Navy that underpins its structure, character, and tone.

Navies are capital-intensive: the ships, submarines, airplanes, and the infrastructure that supports them represent significant investments. Accordingly, the power, range, and capacity of the Navy are a function of what the Nation buys. What and how much are determined by our national interests, global obligations, assessments of geopolitical and technical trends, the Nation's technical and industrial capacity, and the political determination of how much to invest in the Navy.

Those expensive things have value only when the human element is added—the men and women of the U.S. Navy. They define how and how well the Navy performs as a function of culture, ethos, tradition, and competence. Those aspects are shaped over time by experience, standards, and the norms and expectations of the society from which we draw those who serve. This is a complex mix to be sure, but there are some factors that stand out that have shaped and continue to define the Navy.

Global Maneuver, Global Response. Nothing influences an organization over time more than the environment in which it exists and operates. For a military service, that environment shapes its organization, practices, traditions, and character. The Navy's operational environment is the vast oceans of the world—70 percent of the earth's surface and an international commons. Moving naval power without having to seek and obtain basing or overflight permission, especially when concerns of sovereignty are more acute in today's connected world, continues a tradition and *duty* of being prepared to be first on the scene in the Nation's response to crisis and conflict. To remain poised persistently in international space, unencumbered by political sensitivities of being on the ground, reinforces the imperative for operational flexibility that other Services do not enjoy. That unencumbered maneuver space of the sea is also changing and unforgiving in its natural power.

These are the factors that define and shape navies and the officers who serve in them. There is an allure to such an operational and physical environment, but there must exist an aptitude and a personal and professional comfort in operating, fighting, and leading at sea. Accordingly, a naval officer must be the following:

Uniquely Independent and Self-Reliant. Times and technology have changed and the complete (and enviable) autonomy enjoyed by those who put to sea in pre-wireless days is gone forever. However, regardless of how well connected we may be today, a small ship on a large ocean reinforces the Navy's culture of independence and self-reliance. Implicit in this is the concept of *shipmate*, every man and woman onboard depending on and trusting in each other for victory, success, and safety. Nevertheless, that same environment reinforces the importance of a culture of command in the Navy and the imperative of accountability.

Confident in a Culture of Command. Environment, independence, and self-reliance are the basis for the Navy's culture of command and accountability. This approach is unique to those who go down to the sea in ships and predates the founding of our Navy. The linkage of responsibility, authority, and accountability that endures today was forged in the unforgiving environment of the sea, the self-contained community of the ship, and the need for life-and-death decisions at any time. Thus exists an overriding priority on command, not a staff approach to decisions, and with it a seemingly obsessive sense of accountability. To many it may seem unjust and too unforgiving, but that is the essence of the culture of command and the "cruel business of accountability"[2] at sea and within the Navy.

At Ease in Life in Five Dimensions. The complexity of warfare continues to increase. Precision, lethality, range, and domains expand. In the last century navies have evolved from fighting in the single dimension of the ocean's surface to three dimensions—on, above, and below the surface. Add to that now space and cyberspace. A single ship can reach into each of the domains and be threatened from any of them. Technology, like the tide, will not be turned back, and innovation and experimentation will be the difference in whether and how the Navy will win or lose. The proud communities within the Navy retain their identities, but the need for integrated, whole, and innovative solutions will prevail.

Defined by Deployments. All Services have been stressed recently by repeated deployments associated with our recent wars, and the burden and costs have been heavy on all. But the Navy is a Service that deploys routinely. That is what it does and has done for centuries. The Navy is about being forward in war *and* peace. Only forward presence enables the swift, decisive response the Nation has come to expect of its Navy in crisis, conflict, or disaster. Importantly, the Navy's culture of deployment is an obligation shared unstintingly by those who remain behind—Navy families.

Dauntless in Diplomacy. A U.S. Navy warship is the United States. On the high seas or in a foreign port, that ship is the United States of America—our flag is flying there; it is U.S. sovereign territory. Whether commanded by a lieutenant or a captain, that ship is a statement of our presence, interests, and resolve. Every Sailor represents the Navy and the Nation, and he or she knows it.

Committed to a Unique Bond. Our Nation is fortunate to have the extraordinary power of the Navy on, above, and under the sea, coupled uniquely with the unmatched flexibility and ferocity of the U.S. Marine Corps. The character, structure, and tone of a force that define the Navy find like traits in the Marine Corps. It is not coincidental. It is a common bond forged by projecting power from the sea, a bond as old as the Nation and one to be nurtured as long as the Nation endures.

The U.S. Air Force, by General John P. Jumper, USAF (Ret.), Chief of Staff, 2001–2005

During the evening of March 27, 1999, while I was serving as Commander of United States Air Forces in Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was fully engaged in Operation *Allied Force*, the alliance effort to expel Slobodan Milosevic's military forces from Kosovo. The evening did not start well. At approximately 2030 hours an F-117 stealth fighter was tracked and shot down by a Serbian SA-3 surface-to-air missile. In the real-time world of integrated command and control, our entire chain of command knew instantly as the siren sound of the ejection seat survival beacon echoed over the universal distress frequency, requiring no further explanation as to what had happened. In my command center, the hot lines erupted with demands to know how this could happen to a supposedly invisible stealth aircraft, and anxious discussions about the political consequences of an American pilot falling into Serbian hands. Air operations were assumed to be free of risk, somehow out of reach of the enemy. That was the low point. What unfolded throughout the rest of the evening was predictable, and confirmed my pride in serving our Nation as one of the 300,000 men and women—active duty, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve—who call ourselves Airmen.

On that night, Airmen from around the globe would contribute their remarkable skills as the little-known and less-understood world of combat search and rescue (CSAR) came to life, awakened by the dreaded wail of a distress beacon. Within minutes, the Rescue Coordination and Air Operations Centers in Italy began to assemble the collection of capabilities required to bring this downed Airman home. Intelligence, surveillance, and electronic warfare platforms—airborne,

manned and unmanned; satellites with very special capabilities for providing precise location and identification; special operations forces from the Army, Navy, and Air Force; dozens of air-refueling aircraft; airborne early warning; a global network of intelligence analysis and command and control—all fell in on this single problem. On CSAR alert that night, from a base in Italy, was a flight of four A-10 Warthogs led by a young captain. It could have been any of several flight-lead qualified captains in that squadron. It really didn't matter. But this captain was a graduate from the Air Force Weapons School. I did not know him at the time, but I was very familiar with the rigorous training he had endured to earn the Weapons School patch. This night he was the CSAR commander.

From our command center we listened as he led his flight toward enemy territory while organizing his globally sourced team: first, get a precise fix on the location; then, put the strike assets on the tanker to be ready when needed; move the tankers and surveillance assets in as close as possible to the surface-to-air missile rings; get the special operators airborne with the helicopter refueling assets; set up the combat air patrols and airborne early warning radars to deal with enemy fighters; position the ground-mapping radars to detect movement; activate communication networks to deal with enemy jamming; and complete the myriad tasks necessary to set the line and call the play.

All did not go well. There was initial confusion about the location of the downed Airman. One hour passed, then two, while the A-10s probed to test enemy reaction and reconcile inaccurate location data. Everyone's patience was tested, except for our captain who had organized his team to methodically work the problem. As patience thinned my hot lines grew hotter with suggestions that I step in personally to oversee the operation, that something different had to happen. My simple reply: "There is a captain commanding this rescue force, and no one on the planet is better trained or better positioned to complete this mission. We will let him do his job."

Then, we had radio contact with the downed Airman and an accurate location from our space forces. As the CSAR helicopters infiltrated with their special operations teams, we watched this armada, simple green blips on a screen moving toward the pickup point. Serbian ground forces were also moving closer to the pickup area. As the

helicopters drew near, so did the rest of the dozens of aircraft stacked in orbits, ever closer to the scene, pressing inside of surface-to-air missile rings, whatever it took to get our guy. Ground fire and communications jamming were intense in the pickup area, but there was no enemy action to engage the many aircraft poised to engage when needed—no missiles firing, no fighters scrambling. The A-10s maneuvered to decoy the Serbian ground forces and then, with the downed pilot doing all the right things to guide the helicopters to his location, our special operations team rescued the Airman in sight of closing Serb ground forces. All safely returned to base.

I reflect back on this operation with the greatest pride. Within an hour, all of the technical skills, dedication, and energy of hundreds of Airmen were repurposed to create a team with singular, intense focus. The best training in the world taught them how to plan and execute this most difficult mission without notice or rehearsal. All grasped the urgency of the task and shared the determination to succeed. It didn't matter if you were a fighter pilot, a member of a tanker, space, or surveillance crew, or part of a special operations team. From the commanders in the operations centers to the hundreds of Airmen who maintain the platforms, load the weapons, create and maintain the networks, fly the satellites, control the airspace, work the complex mobility and logistics supporting many bases, each role was demonstrated and validated on this night. No one Airman could have been successful without the success of all other Airmen. And our captain? He was introduced by the President of the United States at the next State of the Union address and went on to become a general officer in the United States Air Force.

As Airmen we master the technology to control the speed and time compression of the vertical dimension in air and space. We train to rally our forces rapidly and globally. We make our Nation's joint forces better and coalition operations possible. We are mindful of our oath to defend the greatest Nation on earth and dedicate our service to its citizens.

The U.S. Coast Guard, by Admiral James M. Loy, USCG (Ret.), Commandant, 1998–2002

Close your eyes and place a finger anywhere on a map of the United States and you're likely to pinpoint a place where the United States Coast Guard is providing some sort of valuable service to the Nation and its citizens. Wherever you find cargo ships, sailboats, motorboats, bridges, ports of entry, or tankers full of crude oil, the Coast Guard is there. Wherever there is a problem in navigable U.S. waters with drugs, illegal migrants, customs issues, or smuggling, the Coast Guard is there. Whenever and wherever there is a need for homeland security or operations in defense of the United States, the Coast Guard is on hand performing its duty. The Coast Guard often operates without fanfare, routinely in support of other government agencies or military Services, frequently initiating or leading the action. And of course, all Americans know that when they are in trouble at sea, the Coast Guard will answer their distress call, promptly and efficiently.

The service's greatest strength is its multimission character wherein its agility and adaptability have become legendary. As one member of Congress once told me at a hearing, "If the mission is really hard and really wet, we're going to give it to the Coast Guard!"

So the inevitable question, of course, is: "How does the Coast Guard do so much so efficiently, with so few people, and so little money?"

First, it's the people. There are no spectators in the Coast Guard. Everybody performs several jobs, and the people match the multimission nature of the organization. The Coast Guard is filled with inspired and dedicated people of character and humility who do great things every day.

Second, the Coast Guard lives and breathes leadership. It pervades every aspect of an organization in which every person is a leader. One extraordinary example of that reality is the Coast Guard performance during Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005. When it appeared every other organization was failing in its responsibilities, the Coast Guard was doing almost 5 years' worth of Search and Rescue cases in 10 days. Those cases were not being done by admirals and captains; they were being done by young lieutenants with their hands on the controls of a helicopter, and by young petty officers and more junior

enlisted personnel in flat-bottom boats who simply rose to the occasion and got done what needed to be done. So why was the performance standard for the Coast Guard so high? Why were the Coast Guard operations so ably led? Where does such quality come from?

The roots of the Coast Guard go back to the birth of the United States of America. It was a service organization imbued with proper leadership thinking and behavior by the Nation's founders. When our government was formed, President George Washington recognized that the next challenge was to build a new country. Of particular concern to the new President was the establishment of economic stability in the wake of the $70 million debt accumulated during the war. To take on this monumental task, President Washington chose Alexander Hamilton, his friend and former aide-de-camp who had fought alongside him from Trenton to Yorktown. Hamilton's new economic plan concentrated on shipping, which was then, and remains today, the world's primary mode of commerce and trade. He proposed customs duties and tariffs on imported goods, graduated tax rates on revenue, and various other shipping duties. He also advocated Federal responsibility for ensuring safety at sea for ships, their crews, and their cargoes under the American flag. To make such initiatives work, Hamilton believed that "a few armed vessels, judiciously stationed at the entrances of our ports might at a small expense, be made useful sentinels of the laws." Accordingly, he proposed the formation of a seagoing military force that would enforce customs and navigation laws, cruise the coasts, hail in-bound ships, make inspections, and certify manifests.

The first U.S. Congress formally approved Hamilton's proposal. The Act of August 4, 1790, provided for the establishment and support of 10 cutters, along with the creation of a professional corps of 40 commissioned officers to man the new service. The new cutter personnel were given the rank and standing of military officers because, as Hamilton said, "it would attach them to their duty by a nicer sense of honor." Hamilton penned the following letter to the new officers:

> *Always keep in mind that your countrymen are freemen, and as such, are impatient of everything that bears the least mark of a domineering spirit. . . . Refrain from haughtiness, rudeness, or insult. . . . Endeavor to overcome difficulties by a cool and*

temperate perseverance in your duty—by skill and moderation, rather than by vehemence or violence.

Hamilton further stated that his words of advice had been "selected with careful attention to character."[3]

That leadership standard has endured for more than two and one-quarter centuries, uncorrupted by the "business management" thinking of the industrial age, often tested by war, and recently in our time, tempered by terrorism in the homeland.

During my time as the Chief, Office of Personnel and Training at Coast Guard headquarters, I was tasked by the Commandant, Admiral Bill Kime, to produce a set of core values for the service. I assembled a task force of Coast Guard people from all aspects of the service—young and old, civilian and military, officers and enlisted, reserves and Coast Guard auxiliarists. We worked the project for several months, because I sensed the outcome had the potential to resonate far and wide. We grappled with many lists and checked out the core values of many organizations and military Services around the world. We conducted sessions at Coast Guard commands around the service. When I took the final product to Admiral Kime for his consideration and decision, he asked me how I would know if we got it right. Back we went to the mess decks and engine rooms of ships, to the hangar decks of the air stations, and to the lifeboat stations where Coast Guard people worked. We knew we had it right when our proposed set of core values resonated so well with real Coast Guard people. One of the most gratifying remarks I recall was from an E6 petty officer with 18 years in the Coast Guard. He said "Admiral, this set of core values could have been issued by Hamilton himself!"

So what are these core values? They are Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty—words that capture the culture of the Coast Guard as an organization and the mandates for every member.

Honor means high ethical conduct, moral behavior, honesty, integrity, trust, and doing what's right, not what's easy. It means honoring the traditions and the principles that make the Coast Guard and the United States what they are today.

Respect is one of the most important attributes of leadership. From respect spring caring, compassion, understanding, and effective

communication. It is essentially the embodiment of the Golden Rule: Treat others as you would have them treat you. But, in the Coast Guard, it is a hard-and-fast rule. Everyone must treat others fairly and with civility, consideration, and dignity.

Devotion to Duty is the basic acceptance of responsibility, accountability, and commitment to doing your job. It's about taking pride in what you do. It's about a higher calling. "In our organization," says one admiral, "we exist to serve our country and its citizens. We serve with pride. We are devoted to preserving life at war and at home." Devotion to Duty tends to create an organization of doers. Coast Guard officers are committed to showing up for work on time and staying as long as is necessary to get the job done. They are always at their stations, always alert, and always ready to serve.

What does it mean to be a Coast Guard officer? It means that you work very hard to be ready to perform your duty every day. It means that the charge of Alexander Hamilton to the original 40 Revenue Marine officers is alive and well today. It means today's Coast Guard officer can not only recite the Coast Guard's Core Values, but can give you a full explanation as to what each one means. Coastguardsmen can do that because they live them every day.

Notes

[1] Letter dated February 12, 1918, from Brigadier General Charles A. Doyen, Headquarters, Fourth Brigade, Marine Corps, American Expeditionary Forces, to Brigadier General Charles Henry Lauchheimer, Headquarters Marine Corps. Letter provided by Dr. James Ginter, Archivist, U.S. Marine Corps History Office, Quantico, VA.

[2] Editorial, "Hobson's Choice," *Wall Street Journal*, May 14, 1952.

[3] Alexander Hamilton's Letter of Instructions to the Commanding Officers of the Revenue Cutters, Treasury Department, June 4, 1791, available at <www.uscg.mil/history/faqs/hamiltonletter.pdf>.