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## Reflections on Reading

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## REFLECTIONS ON READING

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**I**n late February 2017, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) launched his more comprehensive and digitally focused CNO Professional Reading Program (CNO-PRP). The revised program comprises over 140 books, which are arranged in categories that align with the “Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority.”

CNO Admiral John Richardson, USN, launched the website with these words:

Warfare is a violent, intellectual contest between thinking and adapting adversaries. The team that can think better and adapt faster will win. As we prepare for operations and war with an increasingly complex set of potential adversaries, we must do more to sharpen our thinking, learn the lessons from history, and expand our minds. The books on this list are those that have influenced my leadership development. It is our responsibility as leaders to continue to grow and to always question the status quo. These books have helped me do just that. If you find just one book on this list that challenges you as a leader, then it has been a success. I encourage you to discuss what has challenged you as a leader in our new forum. Remember to never stop striving to expand your mind.

The site provides book summaries aligned with the lines of effort and attributes identified in the Design. They include the following:

***Naval Power.*** These books provide a strong foundation of knowledge on classic and modern maritime strategy, emerging issues, and new threats and opportunities. Historical works in this category span from the age of sail to the many naval battles of World War II and beyond; studying the history of naval power deepens the context and offers precedent for the challenges of the present.

***Fast Learning.*** Books in this category address the challenges of creating a flexible and adaptive learning environment, from the deck plates to the Pentagon, which is critical to the success of our fleet. Applying the best concepts, techniques, and technologies accelerates learning for individuals, teams, and organizations. Clearly knowing the objective and the theoretical limits of performance comes

through practice and education. We must adapt processes and thinking to be inherently receptive to innovation and creativity.

*Navy Team.* These books recognize that we are one Navy team comprising a diverse mix of active-duty and reserve sailors, civilians, and families, with a history of service, sacrifice, and success. Mariners who read these titles will be better prepared to build on this history to create a climate of operational excellence that will keep us ready to prevail against all future challenges.

*Partnerships.* Books in this category speak to the need for our Navy to deepen operational relationships with the other services, agencies, industry, allies, and partners who operate with us to support our shared interests. Partnerships include those with joint service and interagency partners, with international partners, and with research-and-development labs and academic institutions.

*The Canon.* These books provide core knowledge that is fundamental to the naval profession. Understanding the causes of conflict, the dynamics of power, and the intersections of politics, diplomacy, economics, and military power is part of the core knowledge each sailor should have.

*Core Attributes.* Books in this category address the four core attributes of our professional identity—integrity, accountability, initiative, and toughness—that help to serve as guiding criteria for our decisions and actions. By embracing these attributes, our core values of honor, courage, and commitment should be clearly evident in our actions.

In addition to the books and documents that comprise the CNO-PRP, several movies and documentaries have been identified to support the learning objectives of the program.

To be more responsive to changes and to reduce procurement and distribution costs, the CNO-PRP is now limited to electronic/digital versions of books (e-books); hard copies no longer will be distributed automatically to Navy commands afloat and ashore. Many of these e-books are available as downloadable files that can be borrowed (for limited periods but at no cost) from the MWR digital library. Most titles in the reading program also are available for free at My Navy Portal or directly through a log-in from the Navy General Library Program. Security restrictions at your work site may preclude downloading these books via Navy-owned computers, so downloading them to personally owned devices may be necessary. More-detailed instructions on how to access the available books can be found on the program website at [www.navy.mil/ah\\_online/cno-readingprogram/](http://www.navy.mil/ah_online/cno-readingprogram/).

Reading books of consequence can be an interesting and effective way to become more professional sailors and informed citizens. This tradition goes back nearly two hundred years, to Secretary of the Navy Samuel Southard's order that every Navy ship be outfitted with a professional library of thirty-seven books on topics that included mathematics, history, and philosophy. Two centuries later, we should follow in the footsteps of our predecessors and "Read, Write, and Win!"

JOHN E. JACKSON