



## DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

COMMANDANT OF MIDSHIPMEN  
U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY  
101 BUCHANAN ROAD  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21402-5100

2 August 2017

### COMMANDANT'S INTENT

My intent supports the Superintendent's Strategic Plan 2020 Vision of graduating leaders to "serve and lead in an increasingly interdependent and volatile world." As we continue *to pursue excellence in all we do*, I highlight three core principles: **Leadership, Character, and Accountability.**

#### LEADERSHIP

*"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader." - John Quincy Adams*

Your four-year journey as a midshipman is designed to prepare you to lead Sailors and Marines in Peace and to lead, fight, and win in War. Take advantage of every leadership opportunity in Bancroft Hall, in the classroom, and on the athletic fields. Be observant of leadership, good and bad. Learn from those examples and reflect on how you want to lead and be led.

An often-overlooked component of great leadership is humility. It is possible to be both bold and humble. A leader's mindset should be "I am here for them" and "I can only be successful if they are successful." Provide your subordinates opportunities to grow their own leadership capabilities.

#### CHARACTER

*"The force of character is cumulative."  
- Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Character underlies the Navy's Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment. As a commissioned officer, you must possess the ethical underpinning and moral courage to always choose the hard or unpopular "right" over the easy "wrong." Character is the defining element of success for a leader in combat. Strive to strengthen your character foundation as a midshipman - habituate choosing the hard right.

The development and maintenance of character does not end upon graduation and commissioning. Rather, it is a lifelong process that must be carefully guarded. Ultimately, your character is not defined by your self-image, but rather by your choices and your actions.

#### ACCOUNTABILITY

*"On the sea there is a tradition older even than the traditions of the country itself and wiser in its age than this new custom. It is the tradition that with responsibility goes authority and with them both goes accountability... for men will not long trust leaders who feel themselves beyond accountability for what they do." - Wall Street Journal editorial following collision of Wasp and Hobson (1952)*

Accountability is a foundation of the trust formed between those who lead and those who are led. Accountability means taking ownership for failures and sharing credit for successes. While authority can be delegated, accountability can only be held, and every leader should willingly embrace it. In your life as a midshipman, and your future life as an officer, hold yourself accountable and hold your peers and subordinates accountable for their actions. They will expect and deserve nothing less.

The goal of this intent and the focus on these principles are to ensure the Naval Academy continues to produce leaders of character for our Navy and Marine Corps. **Be that leader!**

R. B. CHADWICK