

## Naval War College – “45 Seconds on Leadership and Ethics”

Assumptions are used in decision making every day. Effective leaders validate assumptions prior to making decisions contributing to positive outcomes and setting the example for those they lead. Listen to Naval War College Military Professor Col Chris Hauver discuss assumptions and decision making in this edition of “45 Seconds on Leadership and Ethics.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ne6ooDA6q1Y>



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Naval Medical Leader and Professional Development Command (NMLPDC)

*Leaders Developing Leaders – It's Who We Are*



## Viewpoint

CAPT Rachel Myaing, DC, USN  
Commanding Officer, Naval Medical Leader and Professional Development Command

### “Leaders Developing Leaders”

Welcome to the Leader Development Academy Newsletter!

In the Chief of Naval Operations’ [Navy Leader Development Framework \(LDF\) 3.0](#), it states, “Our journey of leader development starts with our internal drive to bring a team to “best ever” levels of performance. This drives us down the path of three lanes – competence, character, and connections.”

I was intrigued to note that connection was an additional lane added to the previous version of LDF. There is a paragraph that captured my attention; “Personal and intellectual connections are essential to achieving the highest levels of performance. ....Intellectual connections improve competence by sharing mental models, comparing notes, and improving our ability to anticipate our teammates’ next move. Personal connections strengthen our character and resilience by building relationships.”

One does not need to be a “leadership expert” or have all the answers to take part in leader development efforts.

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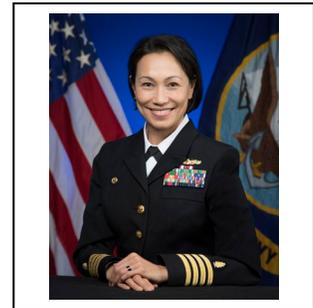
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There are leaders at all levels, and every member of the Navy Medicine team is responsible to develop leaders. We can’t rely only on experience, observation or classroom trainings to develop our future leaders. One of the most effective means of improving leadership is “**Leaders Developing Leaders**”, by tapping into our internal drive to bring our team to the highest level of performance. In addition, we must recognize that clear attention is needed to the issues of leader development, and that it is a vital and important aspect of leaders’ responsibilities.

While aligning with operational requirements, our Navy Medicine team focuses on the readiness of the warfighter and our readiness to support the Navy’s mission. In the current environment and for the future, leadership development couldn’t be more crucial; whether you are enlisted, a civilian or an officer, we must be fully engaged in developing our future leaders. I hope this newsletter provides a means to improve the intellectual connections in “Leaders Developing Leaders.”

## Radio Stockdale

### Podcast –

### *Resilience and Ethics (Episode 4)*

Serving in the military provides unique opportunities and significant challenges. Being able to withstand adversity, learning, growing, and adapting requires resilience. Brad Synder, Naval Academy graduate and former EOD officer describes how losing his sight from injuries sustained in Afghanistan provided an opportunity to test his physical, mental, and ethical resilience, motivating him to achieve great success. Listen to Brad on the Radio Stockdale Podcast #4 - Resilience.

<https://stockdalecenter.com/radio-stockdale/>



## Senior Leader Blog

### *From My Perspective*

**CAPT Scott Coon, MSC, USN, shares a valuable lesson learned early in his career about the role of communication in demonstrating effective leadership**

When I came into the Navy as LTJG, I was the Department Head over a large group of civilian employees. Within a few months on the job, I noticed there were 2 employees that had a history of not getting along. One of the employees came to me and complained about the other employee.

As a leader I prided myself in listening to others, so I sought out the other employee and listened. The other employee said it was all a lie and proceeded to tell me the other side of the story.

After listening to both employees, I thought to myself: one of them is not telling the truth. What should I do?

I spoke to a mid-grade officer at the time and was told that these things work themselves out.

I was conflicted. I grew up articulating expectations clearly and not putting things on the

back burner to let them fester. I thought it was important to bring the two individuals to the table and talk things out.

I set up a meeting, invited the two employees and another person to help as I facilitated.

There might be a fear that a meeting like this may descend into, "I said this, you said that..." without addressing the issue. However, during the meeting this didn't happen. What was made clear is that in the workplace we must

### ***"Having clear communication and expectations is key"***

be professional, we don't have to be friends or like each other, but we will be professional and not undermine each other.

This leadership lesson has served me well throughout my Naval career. Bringing two

people together to talk is not a radical idea. I believe in getting and providing feedback and constructive criticism. This works well not only with subordinates, but with peers and our bosses. If I'm worried I'm not meeting my boss' expectations, I talk to my boss about it. All of us want to come to work and succeed. Having clear communication and expectations is key.

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CAPT Coon currently serves as Executive Officer, Naval Medical Readiness and Training Command, Cherry Point. In addition, he has served as Officer-in-Charge, Naval Branch Health Clinic Diego Garcia; Officer-in Charge, Naval Branch Clinics Dahlgren and Indian Head; and Director, Wounded, Ill and Injured Program Support (M94).



Photo by Lance Cpl Cody A. Fodale

## Deckplate Leader- Achieving Your Goals

HM1(FMF) Rogelio Saldaña, USN

Setting and achieving your goals is often difficult and requires resilience, persistence, and most importantly, assistance from your mentors. HM1 Rogelio Saldaña takes us through his professional development journey, from serving as a Corpsman in Afghanistan to his selection to become a Nurse Corps officer.

During my deployment to Afghanistan in 2010, I conducted several casualty evacuations where our team treated and stabilized Marines. Although the successful evacuations prevented loss of life for the injured Marines, I felt that I could have done more and could have been better prepared.

In that moment, I made a promise to myself that I would pursue higher education. Upon returning from Afghanistan I started taking online courses towards a nursing degree with the future goal of serving as a commissioned officer in the Nurse Corps. However, due to

PCS rotations and deployments, I felt I wasn't making significant progress towards my degree. In 2018, I was selected for the Navy's Career Intermission Program (CIP). Through CIP, I took a three-year break in service to complete my bachelor's degree in nursing and pass the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) to become a registered nurse. In 2022, I applied and was selected to commission as a Nurse Corps officer through the Medical Enlisted Commissioning Program (MECP) direct accession route.

***"The greatest lesson I've learned in the Navy is.... you can't do it all by yourself. It's OK to ask for help when you feel overwhelmed."***

The greatest lesson I've learned in the Navy and in pursuing my nursing degree is you can't do it all by yourself. It is okay to ask for help when you feel overwhelmed. It took me several years to realize the importance of networking, but I am fortunate to have built and maintained a good network of friends and mentors that I can

rely on. I think it is equally as important that I have a diverse group of mentors so I can seek guidance from different points view.

My advice to anyone pursuing their goals is to find the right group of individuals to help you, and at times, hold you accountable when you need constructive criticism. Never stop chasing your dreams. Trust your instincts and know your self-worth. You will be challenged, you will face obstacles, and you will endure a few setbacks. The greatest feeling is bouncing back and proving the nonbelievers wrong.

If you find yourself overwhelmed and don't know where to start with pursuing your goals, remember others have been in your shoes before. Whether it be C-school, commissioning, after service education or job searching, don't fear the unknown. Reach out to a mentor that has been successful to help you get started.

HM1 (FMF) Rogelio Saldaña



HM1 Saldaña currently serves at the Naval Medical Leader and Professional Development Command, Bethesda, Maryland as Program Manager for the Executive Medical Department Enlisted Course (EMDEC) and Financial and Materiel Management Training Course (FMMTC). His previous assignments include First Marine Division; Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center; Naval Health Clinic Corpus Christi; Twentynine Palms, 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion; and 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Logistics Group. He lives in Rockville, Maryland, forever grateful to his parents, from who he learned the values that kept him on the right path, and to work hard to achieve his goals.

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"Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

Mark Twain



## Dr. John E. Schmidt, PhD

Dr. Schmidt is a Professor at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Bethesda, Maryland and Department of Psychology Chair at the Naval Post Graduate Dental School, Naval Medical Leader and Professional Development Command, Bethesda, Maryland.

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As leaders, we are responsible for the well-being of our team members, optimizing individual and team performance resulting in mission success. Every quarter, subject matter experts will provide insight and advice on mental, emotional, and spiritual health to assist in developing your leadership skills. If you are a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker or chaplain and would like to contribute, please contact us at [usn.bethesda.navmedprodevctrm.d.list.nmpdc-ldr-dev-academy1@health.mil](mailto:usn.bethesda.navmedprodevctrm.d.list.nmpdc-ldr-dev-academy1@health.mil)

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“By listening with an empathetic ear, by putting ourselves in their shoes, and by maintaining an open mind, we develop a culture of enthusiastic and energetic teamwork”

John Keyser



Photo by Navy Petty Officer 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Oswald Felix Jr.

## Our Mental Health Matters – Lessons in Leadership

Dr. John E. Schmidt

Sometimes things do not go as planned, or perhaps there is unanticipated conflict among members of our team. Challenges can come from any source; they could be situational issues that are beyond our control (such as a pandemic) or personal life events. As leaders we must be cognizant of the mental health challenges being faced by those we are leading.

Sometimes the mental health struggles of our team members can interfere with the effectiveness of our leadership.

All of us will have days when we are not ourselves: when we do not feel effective, and things are not going according to plan. However, what we as leaders need to be mindful of is when one of our team members has a lasting, and sometimes, unexpected change in behavior or temperament, not just a bad day or two. Perhaps a team member has recently become withdrawn, or irritable, or you notice other behaviors that are out of character for that person.

Those changes may have a negative impact on the team and on the mission.

The prevalence of significant symptoms of mental health distress and, specifically depression and anxiety, has grown exponentially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the US population and even more so among our active-duty military service members. These mental health problems can be challenging to leaders, and it is important that we successfully manage these problems when they are impacting someone on our team.

***“What we as leaders need to be mindful of is when one of our team members has a lasting and sometimes unexpected change in behavior or temperament, not just a bad day or two.”***

**Depression:** The primary symptoms of depression are a lack of pleasure in doing what are normally enjoyable activities and feeling down more days than not.

There are other common Symptoms we might see such as a lack of self-care, poor personal hygiene, lethargy, and social withdrawal.

Many of us will experience depressive symptoms at some point in our lives. One or two days of feeling down or “blue” every now and then is normal. It becomes concerning when the symptoms last for two weeks or more. This is when we, as leaders, may notice an impact on the performance of the team.

There are many reasons why someone might be experiencing a depressive episode, ranging from a major life loss like the death of a family member, a recent breakup with a partner, job burnout, or perhaps the person has a history of depression and is experiencing a recurrence. Regardless of the reason why the person might be experiencing depression, the impact on the team can be profound. If we, as leaders, are unaware of the mental health status of that team member who is struggling with depression, we might interpret their behavior in a very different way. We may think

## Leader Development Forum – Being a Better Mentor-in-the-Moment By Jessica Wentlent, LTJG, MSC, USN

Do you have a mentor? This is a question that inevitably arises during most of our careers. It is likely followed by a moment of silence or varying responses ranging from, “I’ve had great mentors” to “I don’t need a mentor.” But do we have a limited view of what mentorship is?



Photo by NMLPDC PAO

Most formal mentoring programs are not adequate to employee development because they are implemented as structured meetings with a single mentor-mentee connection (Johnson and Smith, 2019). The formality of the relationship often becomes an administrative check in the box versus the unstructured, real-life discussions needed to establish an organic connection between two people.

According to Johnson and

Smith (2019), the most effective mentorship happens when it is reinforced through mentors-of-the-moment. As Johnson and Smith (2019) states, “a mentor-of-the-moment is when all members of the organization engage in mentorship opportunities within daily interactions to develop junior colleagues or peers.” It is a quick and informal exchange while passing in the hallway, standing in line for lunch, at morning quarters and intentional phone calls in a

remote environment. In addition to laying the trust framework for a future mentor and mentee relationship, small positive interactions stimulate inclusion by increasing leadership interactions with all employees. The result is a high performing employee with more confidence, more job satisfaction, increased chance of mentoring others, and a stronger connection to the team by increasing leadership interactions with all employees.

(Continued on page 6)

## What Would You Do? Questions from the Deckplate

**Q: I received by FITREP/EVAL debrief today and I was “Promotable” for the first time. Yes, I just made rank, but still, I know I am outperforming everyone in my new rank. At least from my perspective I am not a “P.” How does this look on promotion/commissioning boards? Should I submit a statement? How can I discuss this with leadership?**

Answer: CAPT Eric Hoffman, MSC, USN (Executive Officer, Naval Medical Leader and Professional Development Command) – Promotion is not solely based on past performance. It also recognizes your potential as a professional and leader to excel in positions of elevated responsibility at the next rank. As a new member of an established peer group, it will take some time to develop experience and demonstrate growth in ever more demanding roles. In other words, you must prove yourself at your new rank,

as you did at your previous rank. Receiving a promotable recommendation in your new rank will not be viewed as negative. In fact, it acknowledges you have met expectations to be successful. In addition, your reporting senior will use block 41 to explain their recommendation, by describing your accomplishments, contributions to mission, and assessment of your professional and leadership potential. Your FITREP should not be a surprise. As a result, a statement is not normally necessary unless there are factual errors or missing information. To ensure understanding of performance expectations and progression, meet with your supervisor regularly, not just during mid-term counseling. Although often uncomfortable, seek constructive criticism. Chances are you may not be seeing what others see (blind spots). Together, identify strengths and, more importantly, opportunities to improve.

(Continued on page 6)

## Leader Development Forum

Sponsored by Naval Medical Forces Support Command (NMFSC) and hosted by the Naval Medical Leader and Professional Development Command (NMLPDC), the Leader Development Forum (LDF), provides an opportunity for Navy Medicine professionals to discuss leadership topics, sharing experiences to develop critical skills necessary for success in both operational and garrison positions. Held virtually once per month, all Navy Medicine hands (Officer Enlisted, Civilian) are invited to attend.

To participate in the LDF, please contact us at [usn.bethesda.navmedprodevc.trmd.list.nmpdc-ldr-dev-academy1@health.mil](mailto:usn.bethesda.navmedprodevc.trmd.list.nmpdc-ldr-dev-academy1@health.mil)

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## LTJG Jessica Wentlent, MSC, USN

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Photo by Alan Gregg, US Navy

## Being a Better Mentor-in-the-Moment (Continued from page 5)

Here's a few tips to help become a better mentor-in-the-moment (Johnson and Smith, 2019).

1. Start the conversation! For example:

- "I see you doing great things with \_\_\_\_\_. Keep charging!" –

"I really value the insight you brought to the team during the last project. Stop by so we can chat about what is next for you."

2. Talk about their success in

front and to others. Affirmation builds self-confidence, promotes opportunities, and helps eliminate imposter syndrome. For example:

-Congratulations on your selection to \_\_\_\_\_."

-I really admire your dedication to \_\_\_\_\_."

-You're a great selection for the Department Head LPO. They're lucky to have you there."

3. Be humble when giving and receiving feedback. Carve out

time in your schedule to give feedback that strengthens behaviors. Be open and humble to receive feedback non-defensively. Be self-aware and be ready to self-correct.

Reference:

Johnson, B., and D.G. Smith. 2019. Real Mentorship Starts with Company Culture, Not Formal Programs. Harvard Business Review.

<https://hbr.org/2019/12/real-mentorship-starts-with-company-culture-not-formal-programs?autocomplete=true>

## What Would You Do? Questions from the Deckplate (Continued from page 5)

Establish achievable goals to develop as a professional and as a leader. As each goal is achieved, reassess, challenging yourself to always be better. This will help you develop to be the officer that the Navy needs to ensure operational success.

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Answer: HMCM Atiba Mathlin, (Command Master Chief, Naval Medical Leader and Professional Development Command) – From the perspective of the promotion and commissioning boards, receiving a promotable promotion recommendation means that you are "Fully-Qualified" to handle the performance expectations at the next higher rank. You are technically not eligible for the next higher rank until you satisfy other requirements such as time in grade, advanced/leadership training, etc.,

but you were recommended for promotion this speaks volumes compared to a progressing recommendation which one could expect having just advanced into the new rank.

There is no need for a statement unless there is information that was omitted from the evaluation. You can ask your leadership to discuss the evaluation if it was not done to the degree needed for you to understand their thought process during your debrief. This conversation should center on understanding the nuances of the reporting senior's applicator of the performance benchmarks.

Have a Deckplate question? Please send to [usn.bethesda.navmedprodevctrmd.list.nmpdc-ldr-dev-academy1@health.mil](mailto:usn.bethesda.navmedprodevctrmd.list.nmpdc-ldr-dev-academy1@health.mil)

## What's New At NMLPDC?

Students world-wide are now able to register for NMLPDC courses on-line using the new Academic Course Registration (ACR) portal at

<https://olb.navy.awesp.health.mil/sites/nmfsc/apps/ACR/SitePages/courseInfo.aspx>.

Prospective students may route requests electronically through their local leadership to our Course Academic Staff, using SharePoint workflow logic within the portal. Students may also track pending and approved course requests through a dashboard, and should circumstances change, withdraw from a course up to a week prior to course commencement.

Leader Development Courses:

- Advanced Readiness Officer Course (AROC)
- Executive Medical Department Enlisted Course (EMDEC)
- Navy Medicine 101 (NM-101)
- Division Officer Leadership Course (DIVOLC)

they are being lazy, unmotivated, negative, and not a team player. Other team members may view them as not pulling their weight. Overall, this can create conflict and impact the dynamics of the entire team.

**Anxiety:** Anxiety can be just as problematic as depression, but the symptoms and the presentation are quite different. Common symptoms of generalized anxiety are feeling overwhelmingly nervous and anxious, having difficulty controlling worry, being restless, and being moody and irritable. The presentation of anxiety may look like the person is procrastinating or avoiding work, turning out products that are incomplete or took much longer than expected. This behavior may be due to fear of failure, being a perfectionist, and being hypersensitive to feedback and constructive criticism. While the person struggling with symptoms of anxiety may feel a great amount of distress and frustration at their inability to control worry, they may appear to others as someone who is difficult to deal with, unable to relax, and is easily irritated. This can create conflict and have a negative impact on team cohesiveness.

**Communication:** The most important thing that we can do for a team member struggling with depression or anxiety is to talk to them. As leaders, we need to be comfortable asking difficult questions of our team members, especially when we are concerned about their well-being. This can be a challenge for many

of us, but it can make all the difference in their world. Someone who is struggling with mental health issues may not know how to express what they are feeling, they may be ashamed, or they may not know what to do. Once we engage privately with them about how they are doing, it opens the door for a much-needed conversation and gives them an opportunity to feel heard and supported. We talk about touching base with every sailor every day, but how often do we actually do that on a personal basis? All our sailors deserve a quick mental health status check from leadership.

***“Once we engage privately with them about how they are doing, it opens the door for a much-needed conversation and gives them an opportunity to feel heard and supported.”***

**Skills Training for the Team:** Workplace mental health training can be so helpful. The Navy’s Expanded Operational Stress Control (E-OSC) program is designed with this in mind. Leaders can have members of the E-OSC team run a workshop focusing on a mental health topic of interest or to learn about skills designed to address a specific type of ongoing issue that the team is struggling with. Group interactions like this can be helpful in a number of ways

including 1) increasing communication and trust amongst the team members, 2) learning about strengths as well as potential weaknesses that team members may be struggling with, and 3) giving everyone an opportunity to learn a set of skills in a group so that the whole team is on the same page. These types of mental health training opportunities also reduce stigma to seeking care.

**Sharing Information.** It also helps to “overcommunicate.” Studies have shown that team members who feel their leaders are not great at communicating or sharing information are nearly 25% more likely to experience mental health issues. Leaders can avoid this by keeping the team informed about any command or mission pertinent information, changes, or updates. Communication also includes ensuring team members are aware of mental health resources and other readily available sources of support like Fleet and Family Services and Military OneSource.

**Time for Self-Care:** Other ideas that leaders have used to help alleviate work-related mental health distress include encouraging mental health days, where the leader will give a team member special liberty or allow them to take a day of leave so that the individual can engage in self-care activities. Of course, this depends on mission requirements. Leaders have also arranged for off-site non-work-related activities for teams, such as going to a high ropes course or other fun team building activities.

## **Benefits of Personal and Professional Growth.**

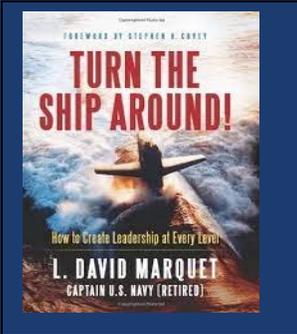
Sometimes our team members become bored with the mundane routine of our everyday activities, and this can lead to an increase in mental health challenges (reflect on those long deployments). Most of us feel engaged and content when we are learning and growing. Whether that challenge is work-related or geared towards personal or professional development goals, the personal commitment to striving for individual goals nearly always has a positive impact on mental health.

**Mental Health Resources:** Make referrals when warranted. If you are not sure if a referral is needed, then talk to a professional confidentially about your concerns.

### **Department of Defense Mental Health Resources for Service Members and Their Families**

The DoD offers a variety of mental health resources to service members, employees, veterans, and their families. Find more information at:

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/2737954/departme nt-of-defense-mental-health-resources-for-service-members-and-their-fam/>



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**Leaders Developing Leaders  
It's Who We Are**  
[www.med.navy.mil/Naval-Leader-and-Professional-Development-Command](http://www.med.navy.mil/Naval-Leader-and-Professional-Development-Command)

## Book Review

### Turn the Ship Around! - L. David Marquet

By Veronica L. RestrepoMolina, LT, MSC, USN

In his book, *Turn the Ship Around*, L. David Marquet (CAPT retired) shares leadership lessons he learned while serving as the Commanding Officer of the USS SANTA FE. Leadership is not for the select few who sit at the top of the organizational hierarchy. In highly effective organizations, where personnel are properly trained and demonstrate professional competence, we find leaders at every level, and we learn from them regardless of their position in the organization.

CAPT Marquet teaches us that it is important to empower our subordinates to accomplish mission objectives, allowing their passion, initiative, and intellect thrive. By providing the team control, we create leaders at every level, and in turn, create self-sustaining success for the organization regardless of who becomes the next person at the top of the organization's pyramid. However, when we don't empower our people, micro-management may emerge with accompanying low morale and resentment from the team toward their leader, ultimately undermining the mission.

Critics of *Turn the Ship Around* point out CAPT Marquet assumes that all organizations resemble the Navy Submarine community where members are highly selected performers. As a result, his lessons/observations may not universally apply. I don't agree. Regardless of the organization, as CAPT Marquet suggests, support, training, and the resources necessary to develop our team are required to provide opportunities for success. Once in place, leaders may step aside and watch their teams excel, creating leaders at every level.

Additionally, from listening to CAPT Marquet (audiobooks are wonderful), it was quite clear to me that leadership challenges faced by the Line community are identical to those faced by Staff communities, to include Navy Medicine. Effective leaders empower individuals in their teams to achieve professional competence and to excel as leaders at all levels. The result.... operational excellence.

Without question, I highly recommend reading (or listening to) *Turn the Ship Around*.

## For Consideration.....

*Ultimately, leadership is not about glorious crowning acts. It's about keeping your team focused on a goal and motivated to do their best to achieve it, especially when the stakes are high and the consequences really matter. It is about laying the groundwork for others' success, and then standing back and letting them shine. – Col (ret) Chris Hadfield, RCAF*



Photo from [chrishadfield.ca](http://chrishadfield.ca)

A decorated astronaut, engineer, and pilot, Royal Canadian Air Force pilot, Colonel (ret) Chris Hadfield has accomplished much during his career to include induction into Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame, flown three space missions, assisted in building 2 space stations, performed two spacewalks (first Canadian to walk in space), and commanded the International Space Station.