



Lighthouse Service

USCGC ASPEN (WLB 208)

Command Philosophy



Commanding Officer
LCDR VandenHeuvel

Mission objectives: ASPEN sailors safeguard commerce by maintaining a vital network of navigable waterway systems along California's coast, ports and harbors. We routinely work in demanding environments, often shrouded in fog. In all phases of operations whether buoy-tending, enforcing U.S. laws, or conducting rescues, we make risk acceptable decisions using safety and teamwork as our cardinal headings.

Shared core values of *Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty* guide our actions. Core values come first; they serve as our ready-anchor both **on and off duty**. My leadership watchwords identify four cornerstones for creating a thriving command climate that promotes mission accomplishment, personal growth and unity. I ask you to explore their meanings for yourself, to talk about them regularly and to apply them intentionally.

Service

Service: *“Subordination and selflessness; it entails dedicating your life to something higher or more important than yourself.”* Our Service's reputation is based on our willingness to adapt and execute multi-mission activities; therefore we train and maintain to be *Always Ready* for the needs of our nation. This principle is battle-tested by our crew's ability to pull together, apply talents and energy that combined makes us fully mission capable. Service is our foundation. We are all connected by our enlisted and commissioned oaths with the “special trust and confidence” placed in each of us to put service before self and the needs of others ahead of our own.

Builds

Ethos

Ethos: *“Values peculiar to a specific person, people, or culture.”* ASPEN's motto boasts: “Superior Technology, Superior Performance” however, people are the heart of this ship. Take due care of your ship, yourself and fellow crew. Through trust and mutual respect, we form our culture. Align personal behaviors to core values and take standards seriously. Character development is a lifetime pursuit built on making the right decisions and learning quickly from the wrong ones. ASPEN's culture accepts growing from “failing forward” but will not accept dragging others backwards. Protect our culture.

Develops Leaders

Leadership: *“All Coast Guardsmen are leaders.”*

Leadership starts by building personal credibility through character. Lead from where you are. We are all growing as leaders regardless of rank. Two master skills of good leaders are to learn and listen. Empower and listen to one another, so ASPEN can be inclusive, capable and proficient. Solicit feedback and share best practices in order to improve maintenance, administration, or operational procedures. Continually seek higher responsibility and cross-qualifications.

Creates Fellowship

Fellowship: *“Communities of mutual interest, activity, feeling, or experience.”*

Serving together at sea creates some of the most genuine bonds known. Commit to healthy professional relationships. Recognize your own cultural bias and root out any harmful behaviors. Know your shipmates and find ways to uplift their spirits with encouragement. Proactively manage work-life balance and join in on weekly fitness activities. On those difficult days we all have as sailors, do not bear your burden alone--there is someone here to help you find the answers to challenges. Don't forget to include your family and significant others; they are an essential part of our team that supports our dignity and sense of purpose. Together, let's maintain a work-place where each person makes valuable contributions in support of our missions and in support of each other. Continue to inspire. I am proud to serve with you.