



Commander Kirk S. Lippold, USN (Ret)

Commander Kirk Lippold, USN (Ret.) was the Commanding Officer of the USS *Cole* when it came under a suicide terrorist attack by al Qaeda in the port of Aden, Yemen. During his command, he and his crew distinguished themselves by saving the American war ship from sinking. This event is widely recognized as one of the most brazen acts of terrorism by al Qaeda prior to September 11, 2001.

Today, Commander Lippold is a popular inspirational figure and leadership speaker who remains in high demand with Fortune 500 companies, leading financial institutions, top industry associations, the Department of State, Department of Defense, Department of Energy, and state-level governments, both in the United States and internationally.

A 1981 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Commander Lippold experienced a distinguished career serving in a variety of challenging positions that emphasized why leadership matters. His assignments to several different types of ships in the Navy, including a tank landing ship, as well as several Aegis guided missile cruisers and destroyers, expanded his scope of responsibility and leadership opportunities. Operating ships at sea is a hazardous business. These activities present unique challenges that necessitate quick thinking and split second decisions to deal with potentially dangerous situations.

Training and preparation define readiness. Leadership when it matters will determine whether any organization will survive. While preparing for each deployment, Lippold developed the rigorous mindset necessary to sail into harms way. Each deployment was unique and supported U.S. military forces engaged in peacetime and combat operations. These experiences sharpened his leadership skills while also improving his ability to deal with any crisis. On October 12, 2000, in a split second in time, all these skills came into sharp focus during the attack on USS *Cole*. Like any crisis, it was unexpected. What that moment did was define why day-to-day leadership and crisis management skills are important.

Commander Lippold also gained a wealth of knowledge during his assignment to the Navy Postgraduate School, earning a Masters of Science in Systems Engineering. He is also a graduate of the United States Army Command and General Staff College and the Joint Forces Staff College. He served as the Administrative Aide to the Secretary of the Navy where he learned to appreciate the intricacies of how national security policy is formulated at the critical intersection of the military and the civilians who exercise control over it. He subsequently served on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Directorate for Strategic Plans and Policy (J-5) and the International Strategy Division in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (N51S).

Commander Kirk Lippold's personal awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (three awards), Meritorious Service Medal (three awards), Combat Action Ribbon, Navy Commendation Medal (two awards), Joint Service Achievement Medal, Navy Achievement Medal (two awards), in addition to various campaign and service ribbons.

Commander Lippold retired from the U.S. Navy in 2007 and founded his company, Lippold Strategies, LLC. With a firm belief that leaders set the standard and tone for any organization, he built his business with a keen focus on executive leadership development and crisis management. He continues to appear on every major news network to bring thoughtful and common sense analysis on national security issues and world events and remains an engaged leader and leadership mentor!