



Only a seaman realises to what great extent an entire ship reflects the personality and ability of one individual, her Commanding Officer. To a landsman, this is not understandable—and sometimes it is even difficult for us to comprehend—but it is so! A ship at sea is a different world in herself, and in consideration of the protracted and distant operations of the fleet units, the Navy must place great power, responsibility and trust in the hands of those leaders chosen for command. In each ship there is one man who, in the hour of emergency or peril at sea, can turn to no other man. There is one who alone is ultimately responsible for the safe navigation, engineering performance, accurate gunfire and morale of the ship. He is the Commanding Officer. He is the ship. This is the most difficult and demanding assignment in the Navy. There is not an instant during his tour as Commanding Officer that he can escape the grasp of command responsibility. His privileges, in view of his obligations, are almost ludicrously small; nevertheless, this is the spur which has given the Navy its great leaders. It is a duty which richly deserves the highest, time-honoured title of the seafaring world :

Captain

Joseph Conrad
1857 - 1924

