

Chairman Ike Skelton's Recommended Booklist

1. Robert B. Strassler. [The Landmark Thucydides: A Guide to the Peloponnesian War](#). Simon & Schuster, 1998.

Thucydides called his account of two decades of war between Athens and Sparta "a possession for all time," and indeed it is the first and still most famous work in the Western historical tradition ... The Landmark Thucydides is a guide to the Peloponnesian War and a mine of military, moral, political, and philosophical wisdom." – Google Books

2. H. W. Crocker III. [Don't Tread on Me: a 400-year History of America at War, from Indian Fighting to Terrorist Hunting](#). Crown Forum, 2006.

"In Don' t Tread on Me, Crocker unfolds four hundred years of American military history, revealing how Americans were born Indian fighters whose military prowess carved out first a continental and then a global empire.... From the seventeenth century on, he argues, Americans have shown a jealous regard for their freedom-- and have backed it up with ... a tradition that includes Rogers' Rangers, Merrill's Marauders, and today's Special Forces." – Google Books

3. John Keegan. [Intelligence in War: the value--and limitations--of what the military can learn about the enemy](#). Vintage Books, 2004.

In this case-based study of the practicality of intelligence in military campaigns, John Keegan argues that, while certainly important, military intelligence has failed to decisively decide campaigns from Napoleon's invasion of Egypt to the present day.

4. Brendan Simms. *Three Victories and a Defeat*. Allen Lane, 2007.

"This highly original, extremely enjoyable book tells the story of Britain's extraordinary scramble to world power in the 18th century and how, through hubris and incompetence, it lost almost everything it had gained Having created a new empire through battle and diplomacy, Britain then spectacularly lost it, this time because of its chaotic failure to maintain its European alliances." – Google Books

5. Robert Asprey. [The Rise of Napoleon Bonaparte](#). Little, Brown and Company, 2000; and [The Reign of Napoleon Bonaparte](#). New York: Basic Books, 2001.

"Despite his stand-alone genius regarding tactical maneuver, Napoleon's weakness in the field of grand strategy precipitated gross blunders, such as the invasion of Egypt and Russia. Covering the entirety of Napoleon's life, these two volumes place Bonaparte in his full military context." – Amazon

6. G. J. Marcus. *The Age of Nelson*. Viking Press Inc., 1971.

As Geoffrey Marcus accurately depicts, the Anglo-French war between 1793 and 1815 was a period that abounded in extremely important lessons for the Royal Navy: the right use of intelligence; defense against invasion; the conduct of joint operations; and the various measures of commerce raiding and protection. In this book, Marcus has given the first modern history of the most formidable fighting force on earth and the instrument that forged for England more than 100 years of Empire. – Inside Cover

7. David Hackett Fischer. [Washington's Crossing](#). Oxford University Press, 2004.

"Fischer's narrative reveals the crucial role of contingency in Washington's winter offensive around Trenton, New Jersey ... and argues that while British and German forces remained rigid and hierarchical, Americans evolved an open and flexible system that was fundamental to their success." – Google Books

8. David McCullough. [John Adams](#). Simon & Schuster, 2001.

"In this powerful, epic biography, David McCullough unfolds the adventurous life-journey of John Adams, the brilliant, fiercely independent, often irascible, always honest Yankee patriot -- "the colossus of independence, " as Thomas Jefferson called him -- who spared nothing in his zeal for the American Revolution; who rose to become the second President of the United States and saved the country from blundering into an unnecessary war." – Google Books

9. Robert Morgan. Boone. Algonquin Books, 2001.

"Morgan's objectivity gives us a completely realized man, the greatest pioneer of the Trans-Appalachian West, who helped open Kentucky to settlement but kept going, settling eventually in Missouri.... Morgan skillfully assesses and often questions the validity of all the tales of good fortune and heroism attached to Boone, especially his friendly relations with Native Americans." – Publishers Weekly

10. Jon Meacham. American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House. Random House Inc., 2008.

"Jackson was, in short, a lot like his country: alternately kind and vicious, brilliant and blind; and a man who fought a lifelong war to keep the republic safe—no matter what it took. Jon Meacham in American Lion has delivered the definitive human portrait of a pivotal president who forever changed the American presidency—and America itself." – Google Books

11. Robert Remini. Daniel Webster: the Man and His Time. W.W. Norton and Company, 1997.

"The life of Daniel Webster, eminent politician and statesman of the four decades preceding the Civil War, is here chronicled by a veteran biographer of the Jacksonian era ... Remini's scholarship and style are flawless, and he introduces substantial new information, notably a new medical interpretation of Webster's death." – Library Journal

12. Martin Dugard. The Training Ground. Little, Brown, and Company, 2008.

"Few historical figures are as inextricably linked as Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee. But less than two decades before they faced each other as enemies at Appomattox, they had been brothers--both West Point graduates, both wearing blue, and both fighting in the same cadre in the Mexican War.... when a group of young men came together to fight as friends, only years later to fight as enemies." – Google Books

13. Roger Launius. Alexander William Doniphan: Portrait of a Missouri Moderate. University of Missouri Press, 1997.

"Alexander William Doniphan (1808-1887) - Missouri attorney, military figure (Mexican War), politician, and businessman - is one of the most significant figures in antebellum Missouri.... however, the key to Doniphan's importance was his persistent moderation on the critical issues of his day." – Google Books

14. William Elsey Connelly. Quantrill and the Border Wars. Pageant Book Company, 1956.

An account of the daring Confederate raider, his accomplices, and his action along the Missouri-Kansas border. Connelly also relates the strange circumstances by which Quantrill became a Rebel standard-bearer.

15. John G. Niehardt. Black Elk Speaks. SUNY Press, 2008.

"This inspirational and unfailingly powerful story reveals the life and visions of the Lakota healer Nicholas Black Elk (1863-1950) and the tragic history of his Sioux people during the epic closing decades of the Old West." – Google Books

16. Doris Kearns Goodwin. Team of Rivals: the Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln. Simon & Schuster, 2006.

“Acclaimed historian Doris Kearns Goodwin illuminates Lincoln's political genius ... as the one-term congressman and prairie lawyer rises from obscurity to prevail over three gifted rivals of national reputation to become president.” –Google Books

17. James Robertson. Stonewall Jackson: the Man, the Soldier, the Legend. Macmillan, 1997.
“A distinguished Civil War historian unravels the complex character of the Confederacy's greatest general. Drawing on previously untapped manuscript sources ... the author capably covers the battles that made Jackson a legend--Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, etc.—while emphasizing ‘the life story of an extraordinary man.’” – Amazon.com

18. Michael B. Ballard. Vicksburg: the Campaign that Opened the Mississippi. UNC Press, 2004.
“When Confederate troops surrendered Vicksburg on July 4, 1863--the day after the Union victory at Gettysburg--a crucial port and rail depot for the South was lost.... In a thorough yet concise study of the longest single military campaign of the Civil War, Michael B. Ballard brings new depth to our understanding of the Vicksburg campaign by considering its human as well as its military aspects.” – Google Books

19. Brian M. Linn. The Philippine War: 1899-1902. University Press of Kansas, 2000.
“Focusing purely on the military aspects of the war, Linn argues that previous studies of the war have mischaracterized it as having qualities which can only be ascribed to the final few campaigns ... he finds that the American victory was due more to rebel mistakes and American ‘social reform’ than to overwhelming military force.” – Google Books

20. Edmund Morris. Theodore Rex. Random House Inc., 2001.
“This well written book is a superior account of the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, backed by first rate research. Above all, Morris finds a rare balance that blends personal story with policy analysis, judiciously sifting the key issues of the Roosevelt administration.” – Foreign Affairs

21. Ronald Spector. At War, at Sea: Sailors and Naval Warfare in the Twentieth Century. Viking, 2001.
Beginning with the 1905 Battle of Tsushima and concluding with the missile engagements off the Falklands and Persian Gulf, Spector chronicles not only the mechanics of battle and the changing technology of war, but also presents these extraordinary stories from the point of view of the participants.
– Google Books

22. Barbara Tuchman. The Guns of August. Random House Inc., 2004.
“Barbara Tuchman has brought to life again the people and events that led up to World War I. With attention to fascinating detail, and an intense knowledge of her subject and its characters, Ms. Tuchman reveals, for the first time, just how the war started, why, and why it could have been stopped, but wasn't.”
- Amazon

23. Barbara Tuchman. Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945. Macmillan, 1970.
Tuchman uses “the life of Joseph Stilwell, the military attaché to China in 1935-39 and commander of United States forces and allied chief of staff to Chiang Kai-shek in 1942-44, to explore the history of China from the revolution of 1911 to the turmoil of World War II, when China's Nationalist government faced attack from Japanese invaders and Communist insurgents.” – Amazon

24. Michael Korda. With Wings Like Eagles. Harper Collins, 2009.
“This in-depth history of the pivotal air contest, known as the Battle of Britain, draws on the firsthand perspectives of pilots, ground crews, and commanders on both sides, in an account that places the

campaign against a backdrop of the political forces that shaped it.” – Google Books

25. Richard G. Davis. Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe. DIANE Publishing Company, 2004.

“This is an authoritative study of United States air doctrine from its imaginative theoretical beginnings to its grim implementation and reevaluation during and after WWII.... This book will be of special interest to air force enthusiasts and military strategists who wish to explore the struggles for limited resources and the problems of managing multinational military coalitions.” – Journal of American History

26. Rick Atkinson. An Army at Dawn: the War in North Africa, 1942-1943. Macmillan, 2003.

“This book depicts the U.S. Army's introduction to modern war in North Africa. The Tunisian campaign, Atkinson shows, was undertaken by an American army lacking in training and experience alongside a British army whose primary experience had been of defeat.... Yet, after Tunisia, the tide of war rolled one way: toward Berlin.” – Publisher's Weekly

27. Rick Atkinson. The Day of Battle: the War in Sicily and Italy, 1943-1944. Macmillan, 2008.

“The battles in Sicily and Italy developed the combat effectiveness and the emotional hardness of a U.S. Army increasingly constrained to bear the brunt of the Western allies' war effort, he argues.... Atkinson makes a convincing case that the Mediterranean campaign played a decisive role in breaking German power.” – Publishers Weekly

28. John Wukovits. Pacific Alamo: The Battle for Wake Island. New American Library, 2003.

“Few know the full story of Wake Island. Now a prominent military historian, breaking new ground on the assault, relates the compelling events of that day and the heroic struggle that followed.... This is the story of that battle from survivors on both sides.” – Google Books

29. James D. Hornfischer. The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors. Bantam Books, 2005.

“James D. Hornfischer paints an unprecedented portrait of the Battle of Samar, a naval engagement unlike any other in U.S. history—and captures with unforgettable intensity the men, the strategies, and the sacrifices that turned certain defeat into a legendary victory.” – Google Books

30. Maxwell Taylor Kennedy. Danger's Hour. Simon and Schuster, 2008.

“In the closing months of World War II, Americans aboard the U.S.S. Bunker Hill found themselves facing a new and terrifying weapon: kamikazes. Drawing on years of research and firsthand interviews with both American and Japanese survivors, Maxwell Taylor Kennedy draws a gripping portrait of men bravely serving their countries and the advent of a terrifying new weapon.” – Google Books

31. Thomas Parrish. Roosevelt and Marshall: Partners in Politics and War. William Morrow and Company Inc., 1989.

“Provides a provocative portrait of two larger-than-life leaders who orchestrated the Allied victory in World War II, changed the role of the American military, and controlled the fate of American politics.” – Google Books

32. James Bradley. Flags of our Fathers. Bantam Books, 2001.

“The beloved bestseller that honors not only one battle and one achievement, but the stories of six heroes and one indelible image: the photograph of the flag raising at Iwo Jima.” - Google Books

33. Tom Brokaw. The Greatest Generation. Random House Inc., 1998.

“In this superb book, Tom Brokaw goes out into America, to tell through the stories of individual men and women the story of a generation, America's citizen heroes and heroines who came of age during the

Great Depression and the Second World War and went on to build modern America.” – Google Books

34. David Halberstam. The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War. Hyperion, 2007.

“Around Thanksgiving, 1950, units of the Second Infantry Division were virtually annihilated by forces of the People's Republic Army.... In The Coldest Winter, award-winning reporter and historian David Halberstam explodes this moment in time, using it as a jumping off point to delve into the Korean War's particular horrors and triumphs.” – Google Books

35. Tim Castle. At War in the Shadow of Vietnam: U.S. Military Aid to the Royal Lao Government, 1955-1975. Columbia University Press, 1993.

“The first book to recount the full story of U.S. covert operations in Laos during the Vietnam War. Based on newly declassified materials and interviews with dozens of key American and Lao officials, it examines the structure of the U.S. "secret war" in Laos and the long-term consequences associated with it.” – Amazon

36. Mark Clodfelter. The limits of Air Power : the American Bombing of North Vietnam. Simon & Schuster, 1989.

“Analyzes the three major American bombing campaigns against North Vietnam and explains why they proved less effective than expected.” - Google Books

37. Robert Gates. From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of five presidents and how they won the Cold War. Simon & Schuster, 2007.

“As the only person to rise from entry-level analyst to Director of the CIA and to serve on the White House staffs of four Presidents, Robert Gates is uniquely qualified to tell the unprecedented inside story of the Cold War. Drawing on his access to classified information and top-level involvement in policy decisions, Gates lays bare the hidden wars and operations the United States waged against communism worldwide.” – Google Books

38. Norman Schwarzkopf. It Doesn't Take a Hero: General H. Norman Schwarzkopf: the autobiography . Random House Inc., 1993.

“He set his star by a simple motto: duty, honor, country. Only rarely does history grant a single individual the ability, personal charisma, moral force, and intelligence to command the respect, admiration, and affection of an entire nation. Now, ... General Norman Schwarzkopf reviews his remarkable life and career...” – From the Inside Flap

39. George Tenet. At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA. HarperCollins, 2007.

“At the Center of the Storm recounts George Tenet's time at the Central Intelligence Agency... illuminating the CIA's painstaking attempts to prepare the country against new and deadly threats, disentangling the interlocking events that led to 9/11, and offering explosive new information on the deliberations and strategies that culminated in the U.S. invasion of Iraq.” – Google Books

40. Thomas E. Ricks. Fiasco: the American military adventure in Iraq. Penguin Press, 2006.

“Provides eye-witness accounts of people, ranging from commanders to intelligence officers, army doctors to ordinary soldiers, that contradict the official stories and figures of the second Iraq War. This book gives an insight into the plight of ordinary soldiers doing nightmarish jobs, and the real nature of the fighting in Iraq.” – Google Books

41. Thomas E. Ricks. The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American military adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008. Penguin Group Inc., 2009.

“At the core of this story is General David Petraeus, a military intellectual who has gathered around him an unprecedented number of officers with both combat experience and Ph.D.s.... The Gamble offers news breaking information, revealing behind-the-scenes disagreements between top commanders ... and examines the congressional hearings through the eyes of Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker, and their views of the questions posed by the 2008 presidential candidates.” – Google Books

42. Marc Gonsalves et al. [Out of Captivity: Surviving 1,967 Days in the Colombian Jungle](#). William Morrow, 2009.

After crash landing in the midst of the Colombian jungle, five civilian contractors find themselves caught in a struggle for survival that would last over three years.

43. Bob Woodard. [The War Within: a Secret White House History, 2006-2008](#). Simon & Schuster, 2008.

“As violence in Iraq reaches unnerving levels in 2006, a second front in the war rages at the highest levels of the Bush administration.... With unparalleled intimacy and detail, this gripping account of a president at war describes a period of distress and uncertainty within the U.S. government from 2006 through mid-2008.” – Google Books

44. William G. T. Tuttle Jr. [Defense Logistics for the 21st Century](#). Naval Institute Press, 2005.

“Since 1959, a revolutionary change in information technology and defense strategy has swept the field of defense logistics and mandated a new understanding of the objectives and principles of military logistics. Renowned defense logistics expert General William Tuttle covers all aspects of the subject including force projection, force sustainment, and minimizing the logistics "footprint" in battle spaces.” – Google Books

45. David Kilcullen. [The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One](#). Oxford University Press US, 2009.

“As the former Senior Counterinsurgency Advisor to General David Petraeus in Iraq, his vision of war has dramatically influenced American military policy. Kilcullen sees today's conflicts as a complex combination of two trends: small wars and global confrontations and warns that America's actions in the War on Terrorism have tended to conflate these trends, blurring the distinction between local and global struggles and thus enormously complicating our challenges.” – Google Books

46. Malcolm Gladwell. [Outliers: The Story of Success](#). Hachette Book Group USA, 2008.

“Challenging our cherished belief of the ‘self-made man,’ Gladwell makes the democratic assertion that superstars don't arise out of nowhere.... Examining the lives of outliers from Mozart to Bill Gates, he builds a convincing case for how successful people rise on a tide of advantages, ‘some deserved, some not, some earned, some just plain lucky.’” – Amazon

47. Douglas E. Schoen and Michael Rowan. [The Threat Closer to Home: Hugo Chavez and the War Against America](#). Simon & Schuster, 2009.

“Drawing on two decades of experience working at the highest level of Venezuelan and American politics, Schoen and Rowan go behind the scenes to examine Chávez's efforts to subvert both the American economy and his own country's stability.” – Google Books

48. Richard A. Clarke. [Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror](#). Free Press, 2004.

“Clarke, the U.S.'s former terrorism czar, offers a complex and illuminating look into the successes and failures of the nation's security apparatus, especially with regards to George Bush's post-9/11 War on Terror.” – Publisher's Weekly

49. William Murray and Richard H. Sinnreich (eds). [The Past as Prologue: the Importance of History to the Military Profession](#). Cambridge University Press, 2006.

“Exploring the usefulness of the study of history for contemporary military strategists, this volume illustrates the great importance of military history while simultaneously revealing the challenges of applying the past to the present.” – Amazon

50. Gen. David Petraeus and Gen. James Amos. Counterinsurgency: U.S. Army/ Marine Corps FM 3-24. University of Chicago Press, 2007. [For the free U.S. Army Version, Click Here](#)

“The result of unprecedented collaboration among top U.S. military experts, scholars, and practitioners in the field, FM 3-24 espouses an approach to combat that emphasizes constant adaptation and learning, the importance of decentralized decision-making, the need to understand local politics and customs, and the key role of intelligence in winning the support of the population.” – Google Books