

Congressman Ike Skelton's National Security Book List With Reviews

1. Constitution of the United States, Constitutional Convention, 1787.

The Constitution is a product of the Constitutional Convention which was held in Philadelphia, PA, in 1776. The original 13 states ratified it and ever since it has been the base of the American government and freedom.

2. Sun Tzu. The Art of War. Samuel B. Griffith (Translator). Oxford University Press, 1986.

Written in China over two thousand years ago, Sun Tzu's The Art of War provides a basis for the planning and training of military operations. These essays contain principles used by modern day military leaders. This classic work is timeless.

3. Carl von Clausewitz. On War. Ed. and trans. By Peter Paret and Michael Howard. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984.

Clausewitz's classic work on war, written at the time of Napoleon's greatest campaigns, is the basis for a thorough discussion of the art of warfare. Clausewitz is best remembered by the assertion that war is a continuation of politics by other means.

4. Michael I. Handel. Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought. Frank Cass & Company, 2001.

Masters of War is a study based on the works on war by Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, Mao Tse-tung, and, to a lesser extent, Jomini and Machiavelli. The author explains that these military leaders had a great deal in common. Handel states the logic of waging war and of strategic thinking are universal and timeless.

5. John Keegan (ed). The Book of War. Viking, 1999.

Keegan brings together several writings on war, including first hand accounts of battles. The conflicts waged by Caesar, Wellington, Hemingway, and Ernie Pyle are reflected in this book.

6. Edward Sheperd Creasy. Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World: From Marathon to Waterloo. DaCapo Press, 1994.

This book, originally published in 1851, discusses famous battles of the past 2,300 years that changed the course of world history. Conflicts which are discussed include the battle of Marathon down through the battle of Waterloo.

7. Peter Bamm. Alexander the Great. New York, MacGraw-Hill, 1968.

Bamm's writing reflects the brilliant military tactics of Alexander the Great as he fought his way through mountains and deserts of central Asia, all the way to the Himalayas.

8. Sir Gavin De Beer. Hannibal. Viking Press, 1969.

Hannibal fought a losing battle in his quest to protect his birthplace, Carthage. Nevertheless, this work highlights his courage and excellent battlefield tactics.

9. John Keegan. The Face of Battle. New York: Vintage Books, 1977.

Keegan, an instructor at Sandhurst, speaks for soldiers who were involved in the battles at Agincourt, Waterloo, and the Somme.

10. Fred Anderson. Crucible of War: The Seven Years War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754 - 1766. Vintage Books, 2001.

Anderson makes a convincing argument that the American Revolution could not have taken place but for the French and Indian War that was waged in the Americas. The book discusses Washington's engagements as well as the roles of Pontiac, William Pitt, and Montcalm.

11. John Mack Faragher. Daniel Boone: The Life and Legend of an American Pioneer. Owllet, 1993.

Faragher gives an excellent account of the life of America's legendary pioneer and the early struggle against the Indians as he tried to settle the West. Drawing from records and documentation from Boone's own hand, this is an accurate reflection of young America during times that helped shape our country.

12. Richard Barksdale Harwell and Douglas Southall Freeman. Washington. Collier Books, 1995.

An abridgment by Richard Harwell of Freeman's seven-volume biography of the "Father of our Country" helps to place Washington in a historical context.

13. John Sugden. Tecumseh: A Life. Henry Holt & Company, Inc., 1999.

Tecumseh, a Shawnee, endeavored to organize the Native American Confederacy to halt the westward expansion of the American settlers.

14. Stephen Ambrose. Undaunted Courage. Touchstone Books, 1997.

Ambrose's biography of Lewis and Clark is based on their journals, regarding their travels up the Missouri River from St. Louis all the way to the Pacific. Ambrose discusses the military leadership of the explorers as they dealt with Indians and reported to Jefferson.

15. Vincent Cronin. Napoleon Bonaparte: An Intimate Biography. Vergara Editor S.A., 1991.

Cronin gives an accurate portrayal of the famous French general and emperor with full explanation of his various battlefield triumphs including his defeat at Waterloo.

16. Napoleon Bonaparte. The Military Maxims of Napoleon: The Principles of Warfare by Napoleon. Trans. by George C. D'Aguilar. Greenhill Books/Lionel Leventhal, 2002.

This is a distillation of the knowledge, intuition, and wisdom of history's greatest military commander. Napoleon's success was built upon practical experience combined with his own study of classical warfare and his natural grasp of the key principles of war. His thoughts, theories, and commentaries on the subject are presented in the form of accessible and readable maxims, and these, with explanatory comments, reveal the fundamentals of Napoleon's art of waging war.

17. Christopher Hibbert. Nelson: A Personal History. Perseus Publishing, 1996.

Hibbert gives an excellent account of England's best maritime leader. It follows Nelson's story from his joining the navy at age 12 through his decisive victory over the French and Spanish at Trafalgar in 1805, which resulted in his death.

18. John Keegan. The Price of Admiralty: The Evolution of Naval Warfare. Penguin USA, 1990.

Keegan illuminates the history of naval combat by expertly dissecting four landmark sea battles, each featuring a different type of warship: The Battle of Trafalgar, the Battle of Jutland in World War I, the Battle of Midway in World War II, and the long and arduous Battle of the Atlantic.

19. Donald R. Morris. The Washing of the Spears: The Rise and Fall of the Zulu Nation. DaCapo Press, 1998.

Morris provides a sixty year history of Africa's Zulu empire including descriptions of the battles of Isandhlwana and Rorke's Drift.

20. Douglas Southall Freeman. Lee. Touchstone Books, 1997.

Freeman's provides an excellent biography of Confederate war general Robert E. Lee. It captures Lee's military genius and why so many Southerners enthusiastically fought and died under his banner.

21. Ulysses S. Grant. Personal Memoirs: Ulysses S. Grant. Modern Library, 1999.

Grant's memoirs is one of the finest military biographies ever written. It follows Grant's boyhood through his leadership in the Civil War. This fine work was written as Grant was dying from lung cancer.

22. Richard S. Brownlee. Gray Ghosts of the Confederacy: Guerrilla Warfare in the West, 1861-1865. Louisiana Paperback Ed. 1984.

Brownlee's book, incorrectly named, is an excellent discussion of guerrilla warfare along the Missouri and Kansas border from the years 1861-1865. It includes discussion of Missouri's guerrilla's Quantrill and Anderson.

23. James M. McPherson. Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era. Ballantine Books 1989.

McPherson provides a one volume full discussion of the Civil War. This book earned McPherson the Pulitzer Prize. He highlights the military aspects of the war and also describes economic, political, and social forces behind the conflict.

24. Evan S. Connell. Son of the Morning Star. North Point Press, 1997.

Connell gives a thorough account of George Armstrong Custer's military career and the events that lead up to the Battle of Little Bighorn.

25. Elbert Hubbard. A Message to Garcia. Peter Pauper Press, 1983.

This is the famous essay involving the carrying of a message from President McKinley to an insurgent leader in Cuba named Garcia. This is a story of Lieutenant Colonel Rowan, who without question, accepted the mission and fulfilled it.

26. John Eisenhower. Yanks: The Epic Story of the American Army in World War I. Touchstone Books, 2002.

This is an excellent discussion of how Gen. John Pershing created a war-winning army in less than 18 months. The book focuses on World War I senior officers Douglas MacArthur, George Patton, and George C. Marshall.

27. Frank Everson, Vandiver. Black Jack: The Life and Times of John J. Pershing. (Two Volumes). Texas A&M University Press, 1977.

This is a two-volume work on the military leadership of General John J. Pershing. General Pershing is portrayed as a simple, direct, honest, energetic, efficient, and dedicated man and soldier who rose to the rank of General of the Armies. Vandiver traces Pershing from his youth, his cadet days at West Point through his leadership in World War I.

28. Roy Jenkins. Churchill: A Biography. Plume, 2002.

This is one of the best biographies of Churchill, Britain's most famous member of Parliament in the last century. It traces his life from his unhappy boyhood through his two term service as Prime Minister.

29. Allan R. Millet and Williamson Murray. A War to be Won. Harvard University Press, 2000.

This one-volume study of World War II was written by two distinguished military historians. Murray and Millett unapologetically consider the war just and necessary.

30. Douglas MacArthur. Reminiscences. United States Naval Institute, 2001.

MacArthur wrote this book in his own hand and finished it only weeks before his death. This revered and admired general was a remarkable leader of many successful military campaigns.

31. William L. Shirer. Rise and Fall of the Third Reich. Touchstone Books, 1990.

Shirer's book published in 1960, is portrayed as the definitive record of Adolph Hitler and how Hitler nearly succeeded in taking over the world.

32. John Prados. Combined Fleet Decoded: The Secret History of American Intelligence and the Japanese Navy in World War II. Random House, 1995.

Prados gives an excellent picture of World War II's Pacific battles and the role of intelligence in defeating Japan.

34. Hampton Sides. Ghost Soldiers: The Forgotten Epic Story of World War II's Most Dramatic Mission. Doubleday, 2001.

Sides describes the rescue of American and British POW's after three years in a Japanese prison camp near the city of Cabanatuan. The prisoners included the last survivors of the Bataan Death March.

35. Richard Frank. Guadalcanal: The Definitive Account of the Landmark Battle. Penguin USA, 1992.

This is an excellent history of the battle at Guadalcanal as well as the Navy battles that surrounded the island. It draws on first-time translations of Japanese first-hand accounts and declassified U.S. radio intelligence.

36. Stephen Ambrose. The Victors: Eisenhower and His Boys: The Men of World War II. Touchstone Books, 1999.

The Victors is a compilation of Stephen E. Ambrose's best works, drawing heavily from his biography of General Dwight D. Eisenhower.

37. Lynn M. Homan and Thomas Reilly. Black Knights: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen. Pelican Publishing Company. Gretna, 2001.

Between 1941 and 1948, African American airmen trained at a segregated facility in Tuskegee, Alabama. The Tuskegee airmen secured a significant place in American and African American history for bravery in service on and off the battlefield.

38. Frank Freidel. Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous with Destiny. Little Brown & Company, 1991.

Freidel details Roosevelt's life before and during his presidency. It focuses on Roosevelt's service during the Depression and wartime periods.

38. Maj. Gen. Jeanne Holm, USAF, Retired. Women in the Military: An Unfinished Revolution. Presidio, Revised 1993.

Updated through Desert Storm, this revision of Holm's comprehensive history of women in the U.S. armed forces exemplifies excellent scholarship. Holm, a retired major general and former director of the WAF, marshals an impressive body of evidence to support her contention that the increasing number of women in uniform since the 1960s has diminished neither the American military's operational readiness nor its combat effectiveness.

39. William Slim. Defeat Into Victory. Cooper Square Press, 2000.

An account by Field-Marshal Viscount William Slim who led shattered British forces from Burma to India.

40. David McCullough. Truman. Touchstone Books, 1993.

McCullough offers a detailed account of the life of Harry Truman, defining his character and describing his life as a farmer, haberdasher, local official, Senator, Vice President and President.

41. T.R. Fehrenbach. This Kind of War: The Classic Korean War History. Brassey's, Inc., 2000.

This is the classic discussion of the Korean War, which began in June 1950. It brings to life the harrowing and bloody battles that were fought up and down the Korean Peninsula.

42. Robert Coram. Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War. Little Brown & Company, 2002.

John Boyd (1927-1997) was a brilliant military scholar and strategist. Boyd wrote the first manual on jet aerial combat, was primarily responsible for designing the F-15 and the F-16 jet

fighters, was a leading voice in the post-Vietnam War military reform movement and shaped the smashingly successful U.S. military strategy in the Persian Gulf War.

43. Harold G. Moore and Joseph L. Galloway. We Were Soldiers Once...and Young. New York: Random House, 1992.

This is a description of the first major battle fought by U.S. troops in Vietnam. It highlights the story of Lieutenant Colonel Moore as he commanded the battalion that initiated the fighting. This work depicts Ia Drang through the eyes of junior officers and enlisted men of the 1st Cavalry Division and their North Vietnamese opponents.

44. Thomas G. Houlihan. Gulf War: The Complete History. Schrenker Military Publishing, 1999.

This is a thorough history of the Gulf War covering all aspects of the conflict.

45. Robert D. Kaplan. Warrior Politics: Why Leadership Requires a Pagan Ethos. Vintage Books, 2003.

Kaplan explores the wisdom of the ages for answers for today's leaders. While the modern world may seem more complex and dangerous than ever before, Kaplan writes from a deeper historical perspective to reveal how little things actually change.

46. MG Robert H. Scales Jr. Yellow Smoke: The Future of Land Warfare for America's Military (Role of American Military Power). Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.

This is an excellent book discussing current doctrinal debates and the vision of future war. It argues the U.S. Army should instead prepare for more complex political settings as it continues to try to win wars with the minimum of fighting.

47. Russel Frank Weigley. The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy. Indiana University Press, 1978.

This is an excellent work on the development of American military strategy over the years. It discusses wars from the time of the early republic through post World War II.

48. Eliot Cohen. Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen and Leadership in Wartime. Anchor Books, 2003.

An excellent discussion about Abraham Lincoln, Georges Clemenceau, Winston Churchill and David Ben Gurion and what made them great wartime leaders.

49. John P. Murtha with John Plashal. From Vietnam to 9/11: On the Front Lines of National Security. Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003.

Congressman John P. "Jack" Murtha is a Vietnam combat veteran who combines personal memoirs with an analysis that provides accounts of the United States military strategy from Vietnam to 9-11.

50. Thomas E. Ricks. Making the Corps. Touchstone Books, 1998.

Making the Corps discusses Marine boot camp at Parris Island, South Carolina. Here, old values are stripped away and new, Marine Corps values are forged.