

Chief of Chemical's Recommended Professional Reading List

By Brigadier General Thomas Spoehr

There are three critical factors to address in our continuing competence as Dragon Soldiers: institutional training, practical experience in units, and self-development. Because our fellow Soldiers, our families, and all American citizens are counting on us, we cannot afford to neglect any of the three. A key piece of self-development is professional reading. It builds an independent basis of knowledge upon which to form opinions and make judgments.

The following list of books has been selected based on their currency, accuracy, readability, and subject interest. These books pertain to countering chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) threats and hazards and directly support my Corps Vision (see inside back cover). I have made no attempt to place any general military books on this list; for those, refer to the Army Chief of Staff's professional reading list at <http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/reference/CSAList/CSAList.htm>.

Before placing a book on the reading list, I read it. Hopefully, you will encounter other books that you believe deserve a place on the list. I encourage you to identify them as candidates for inclusion. This list will be updated annually, generally in December, so I ask you to submit your suggestions, prior to 1 October, to the following address:

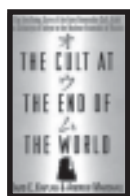
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Finally, if you read all of my suggestions, I would like to know. I encourage you to drop me a note (at the above address) so that I can recognize your professional development efforts. But be forewarned, I might ask you to discuss the material. Enjoy!

CHEMICAL WARFARE



War of Nerves: Chemical Warfare From World War I to Al-Qaeda, Jonathan B. Tucker, Pantheon, 2006, ISBN 0375422293. This recently published (February 2006) account of chemical warfare from World War I to the present is a winner. Particularly useful are the details on U.S. chemical warfare programs.

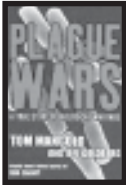


Cult at the End of the World, The Terrifying Story of the Aum Doomsday Cult, From the Subways of Tokyo to the Nuclear Arsenals of Russia, David E. Kaplan and Andrew Marshall, Crown, 1996, ISBN 0517705435. This book is a wake-up call that cults can be both kooky and exceptionally dangerous. Was this a onetime unfortunate confluence of money, crazy ideology, and lax governmental oversight that will never be repeated? Or is it a blueprint for future acts of terror by cults and extremists? You decide. This book is out of print, but try to find a copy. It is worth the effort!

BIOLOGICAL WARFARE



Biohazard: The Chilling True Story of the Largest Covert Biological Weapons Program in the World—Told From Inside by the Man Who Ran It, Ken Alibek with Stephen Handelman, Random House, 1999, ISBN 0375502319. This is one of the classics; all CBRN professionals should read (and probably own) a copy. Written by Ken Alibek, a former second-in-command at Biopreparat—the Soviet Union’s primary organization for producing biological weapons—this book illustrates what a well-financed, state-sponsored biological weapons program can achieve.



Plague Wars: A True Story of Biological Warfare, Tom Mangold and Jeff Goldberg, Macmillan General Books, 1999, ISBN 0333716140. This book offers a comprehensive tour of the world of biological warfare, including a large amount of background information. Since the book was written in 1999, a perspective on the events of 11 September 2001, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and the anthrax attacks of 2001 is not included, but the shortfalls are minor. The book remains relevant today.



Germs: Biological Weapons and America’s Secret War, Judith Miller et al., Simon & Schuster, Reprint edition, 2002, ISBN 0684871580. Although the primary author, Judith Miller, is a controversial figure lately, that does not diminish the value of this book. Written in early 2001, this book also lacks perspective on the events of 11 September 2001, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and the anthrax attacks, but is nevertheless easy to read, accurate, and essential.



Factories of Death: Japanese Biological Warfare, 1932-45, and the American Cover-Up, Sheldon Harris, Routledge, 2001, ISBN 0415932149. Following World War II, the U.S. Government made the conscious decision not to pursue charges for war crimes against the individuals most responsible for this biological warfare program in favor of exploiting the intelligence potential of the Japanese research findings. Officials in the Chemical Warfare Service were directly involved in making this decision; you decide for yourself whether it was the right call. At the time, tensions were high with the Soviet Union.



The Anthrax Letters: A Medical Detective Story, Leonard A. Cole, Joseph Henry Press, 2004, ISBN 0309525845. This book provides a wealth of background information on the anthrax attacks of 2001. And until the culprit(s) are identified, this book may remain the only credible work available.

RADIOLOGICAL AND NUCLEAR OPERATIONS



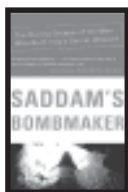
The Making of the Atomic Bomb, Richard Rhodes, Simon & Schuster, Reprint edition, 1995, ISBN 0684813785. With a hefty total of 928 pages, this book is not for the faint of heart. And, like me, if your physics days are long past, you will struggle through parts of this book, particularly in the early stages when Mr. Rhodes takes you through the discoveries in subatomic research. But for those who persevere, the rewards are tremendous.



The Four Faces of Nuclear Terrorism, Charles D. Ferguson et al., Routledge, First edition, 2005, ISBN 0415952433. This book provides extensive discussions on what the authors believe are the four possible means of nuclear terrorism: theft of an assembled nuclear weapon, construction of an improvised nuclear device, damage to a nuclear facility, and construction of a radiological dispersal device. This book is out of print, but used copies are available.



Ablaze: The Story of the Heroes and Victims of Chernobyl, Piers Paul Read, Random House, 1993, ISBN 0679408193. This book provides an excellent account of the 1986 Chernobyl disaster, the biggest nuclear consequence management event ever to take place. At Chernobyl, the Soviet Union's Chemical Defense Forces carried the burden of conducting initial reconnaissance and cleanup operations. The chief of the Soviet Chemical Corps, General Pikalov, personally conducted one of the first radiological reconnaissance missions in the area surrounding the burning reactor—in a reconnaissance vehicle he personally designed! This book is out of print, but used copies are available.



Saddam's Bombmaker: The Terrifying Inside Story of the Iraqi Nuclear and Biological Weapons Agenda, Khidhir Hamza with Jeff Stein, Scribner, 2000, ISBN 0684873869. Although Iraq has undergone a profound change since the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom, this narrative, by the man who was at the center of Saddam Hussein's efforts to produce a nuclear weapon, remains a must-read selection. This book clearly describes the challenges involved for a state to obtain fissile material and key weapon components and is, therefore, very useful in understanding nuclear proliferation.

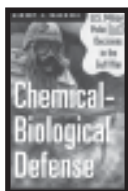
OTHER WORKS AND CHEMICAL CORPS HISTORY



America's Struggle with Chemical-Biological Warfare, Albert J. Mauroni, Praeger Publishers, 2000, ISBN 0275967565. This book provides great background information for those closely engaged in the CBRN business, but it is not for the casual or typical reader. Particularly interesting is the description of the near death of the U.S. Chemical Corps and how circumstances and the actions of key leaders helped preserve this key capability for the U.S. Army. This book is out of print, but do try to find a used copy.



The Chemical Warfare Service: Chemicals in Combat (United States Army in World War II), Brooks E. Kleber and Dale Birdsell, University Press of the Pacific, 2003, ISBN 1410204855. This book is an essential reference for chemical operations during World War II. There are two other books in this series: [Organizing for War](#) and [From Laboratory to Field](#), but this is the best of the three and the most recommended. This book is not a read-through, but it is a key reference source.



Chemical-Biological Defense, Albert J. Mauroni, Praeger Paperback, 1999, ISBN 0275967654. This book contains important information and history on how U.S. forces prepared for and conducted CBRN operations during Operations Desert Storm and Shield—the biggest post-World War II CBRN operations. Included are insights on how the United States allowed chemical and biological readiness to slip and the Herculean efforts it took to regain readiness in equipment and training.

Care to Comment?

The *Army Chemical Review* welcomes letters from readers. If you have a comment concerning an article we have published or would like to express your point of view on another subject of interest to Chemical Soldiers, let us hear from you. Your letter must include your complete address and a telephone number. All letters are subject to editing for reasons of space or clarity.

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