

## COMMENTARY

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### NATIONAL SECURITY BOOK LIST

*Congressman Ike Skelton*

[On 9 June 2003 Congressman Ike Skelton (Democrat-Missouri) released his “National Security Book List,” a compilation of books that he recommends as required reading to all officers of the armed forces, to members of Congress, and all others interested in national security issues. In a press release Congressman Skelton explained,

Professional Military Education is a particular interest of mine. I consider myself lucky that my longtime hobby as a military history enthusiast has complemented my work in Congress as a member of the House Armed Services Committee. Through the years, I have benefitted enormously by seeking out books recommended by others who share my interest in history and military affairs. The fifty books I have chosen cover the topics of leadership, character, and military art. The subject matter ranges from ancient to modern warfare, although a large number of my recommendations focus on the Civil War and World War II. By necessity, some excellent works were omitted—such as Churchill’s outstanding six volume history of World War II—but the list is comprehensive and covers each branch of the U.S. military. If one undertakes to read the entire list, I expect it would be about a ten-year project. However, familiarity with this material should be invaluable to any officer preparing to attend a war college.

Congressman Skelton, the ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee (HASC), was chairman of the HASC’s Panel on Professional Military Education in 1987–88. He is currently the ranking Democrat on the HASC’s Panel on Professional Military Education, which was reconstituted during the 108th Congress.]

- Alexander the Great: Power as Destiny*, by Peter Bamm. McGraw-Hill, 1968. 319pp.
- The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*, by Russell F. Weigley. Macmillan, 1973.
- A Message to Garcia*, by Elbert Hubbard. Peter Pauper, 1971. 32pp.
- The Art of War*, by Sun Tzu, translated by Samuel B. Griffith. Oxford Univ. Press, 1988. 222pp.
- A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War*, by Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett. Belknap, 2001. 736pp.
- Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, by James M. McPherson. Volume 6 of the Oxford History of the United States. Oxford Univ. Press, 1988. 904pp.
- Black Jack: The Life and Times of John J. Pershing*, by Frank E. Vandiver, 2 volumes. Texas A&M Univ. Press, 1977. 1,178pp.
- Black Knights: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen*, by Lynn M. Homan and Thomas Reilly. Pelican, 2001. 336pp.
- The Book of War: 25 Centuries of Great War Writing*, edited by John Keegan. Viking, 1999. 608pp.
- Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War*, by Robert Coram. Little, Brown, 2002. 320pp.
- Churchill: A Biography*, by Roy Jenkins. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001. 736pp.
- Combined Fleet Decoded: The Secret History of American Intelligence and the Japanese Navy in World War II*, by John Prados. Naval Institute Press, 2001. 862pp.
- The Constitution of the United States of America
- Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766*, by Fred Anderson. Vintage Books, 2001. 912pp.
- Daniel Boone: The Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*, by John Mack Faragher. Owllet (reprint), 1993. 429pp.
- Defeat into Victory: Battling Japan in Burma and India, 1942–1945*, by William Slim. Cooper Square, 2000. 576pp.
- The Face of Battle*, by John Keegan. Viking, 1976. 354pp.
- Fifteen Decisive Battles of the Western World: From Marathon to Waterloo*, by Edward S. Creasy. Da Capo (reprint), 1994. 404pp.
- Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous with Destiny*, by Frank Freidel. Little, Brown, 1990. 710pp.
- From Vietnam to 9/11: On the Front Lines of National Security*, by John P. Murtha with John Plashal. Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 2003. 244pp.

- Ghost Soldiers: The Epic Account of World War II's Greatest Rescue Mission*, by Hampton Sides. Anchor, 2002. 344pp.
- Gray Ghosts of the Confederacy: Guerrilla Warfare in the West, 1861–1865*, by Richard S. Brownlee. Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1985. 274pp.
- Guadalcanal: The Definitive Account of the Landmark Battle*, by Richard Frank. Penguin, 1991. 799pp.
- Gulf War: The Complete History*, by Thomas G. Houlahan. Schrenker Military, 1999. 471pp.
- Hannibal: Challenging Rome's Supremacy*, by Gavin De Beer. Viking, 1969. 319pp.
- Lee*, edited by Richard Harwell (an abridgement in one volume of the four-volume biography by Douglas Southall Freeman). Simon & Schuster, 1998. 656pp.
- Making the Corps*, by Thomas E. Ricks. Simon & Schuster, 1998. 320pp.
- Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought*, by Michael Handel. Frank Cass, 3d. rev. ed., 2000. 482pp.
- The Military Maxims of Napoleon*, edited by David G. Chandler. Greenhill Books, 2002. 256pp.
- Napoleon*, edited by Vincent Cronin. Collins, 1971. 480pp.
- Nelson: A Personal History*, by Christopher Hibbert. Addison-Wesley 1995. 472pp.
- On War*, by Carl von Clausewitz, translated by Peter Paret and Michael Howard. Princeton Univ. Press, 1976. 717pp.
- Personal Memoirs: Ulysses S. Grant*, edited by Caleb Carr. Modern Library Classics, 1999. 682pp.
- The Price of Admiralty: The Evolution of Naval Warfare*, by John Keegan. Penguin, 1990. 353pp.
- Reminiscences*, by Douglas MacArthur. Naval Institute Press, 2001. 472pp.
- Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany*, by William L. Shirer. Simon & Schuster, 1990. 1,264pp.
- Son of the Morning Star: Custer and the Little Big Horn*, by Evan S. Connell. North Point, 1997. 448pp.
- Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime*, by Eliot A. Cohen. Free Press, 2002. 304pp.
- Tecumseh: A Life*, by John Sugden. Henry Holt, 1999. 492pp.
- This Kind of War: The Classic Korean War History*, by T. R. Fehrenbach. Brassey's, 2001. 540pp.
- Truman*, by David McCullough. Simon & Schuster, 1993. 1,120pp.

*Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West*, by Stephen Ambrose. Simon & Schuster, 1997. 528pp.

*The Victors: Eisenhower and His Boys: The Men of World War II*, by Stephen Ambrose. Simon & Schuster, 1999. 400pp.

*Warrior Politics: Why Leadership Demands a Pagan Ethos*, by Robert Kaplan. Vintage Books, 2003. 224pp.

*The Washing of the Spears: A History of the Rise and Fall of the Zulu Nation under Shaka and Its Fall in the Zulu War of 1879*, by Donald R. Morris. Da Capo, 1998. 692pp.

*Washington: An Abridgement in One Volume* (of the seven-volume *George Washington*, by Douglas Southall Freeman). Collier, 1993. 792pp.

*We Were Soldiers Once . . . and Young: Ia Drang—the Battle That Changed the War in Vietnam*, by Harold Moore and Joseph Galloway. Random House, 1992. 432pp.

*Women in the Military: An Unfinished Revolution*, by Jeanne Holm. Presidio, 1993. 564pp.

*Yanks: The Epic Story of the American Army in World War I*, by John S. D. Eisenhower with Joanne Eisenhower. Free Press, 2002. 368pp.

*Yellow Smoke: The Future of Land Warfare for America's Military*, by Robert H. Scales, Jr. Rowman & Littlefield, 2003. 208pp.