

United States Army Special Warfare Center & School



Special Operations Center of Excellence

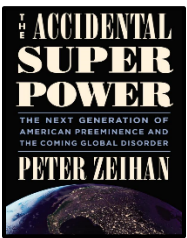


Commandant's Professional Reading List

Strategic Environment

The Accidental Superpower: The Next Generation of American Preeminence and the Coming Global Disorder

Peter Zeihan // New York: Twelve Publishing, 2014

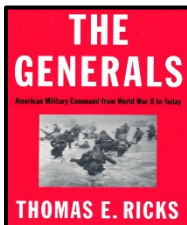


Zeihan examines how the hard rules of geography are eroding the American commitment to free trade; how much of the planet is aging into a mass retirement that will enervate markets and capital supplies; and how, against all odds, it is the ever-ravenous American economy that—alone among the developed nations—is rapidly approaching energy independence. Combined, these factors are doing nothing less than overturning the global system and ushering in a new order. He concludes that geography will matter more than ever in a deglobalizing world and that America's geography is simply sublime.

Leadership

The Generals: American Military Command from World War II to Today

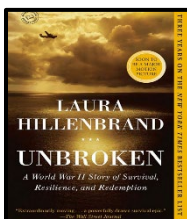
Thomas E. Ricks // New York: Penguin, 2013



Ricks traces how the promotion and relief of generals in the U.S. Army changed from the 1940s to the present day. During World War II, generals who failed to perform to the expected standard were relieved. After the war, the Army gradually abandoned this approach for one in which the relief of general officers became rare and almost never for battlefield performance. This change has played a crucial role in American wartime failures from 1950 to the present.

Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption

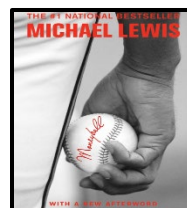
Laura Hillenbrand // New York: Turtleback Books, 2014



The inspiring true story of a man who lived through a series of catastrophes almost too incredible to be believed. In evocative, immediate descriptions, Hillenbrand unfurls the story of Louie Zamperini—a juvenile delinquent-turned-Olympic runner-turned-Army hero. During a routine search mission over the Pacific, Louie's plane crashed into the ocean, and what happened to him over the next three years of his life is a story that will keep you glued to the pages, eagerly awaiting the next turn in the story and fearing it at the same time.

Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game

Michael Lewis // Philadelphia: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004

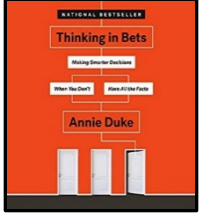


This book is an amazing eye-opener about a then radical new way of managing a pro baseball team that allowed the dirt-poor Oakland A's to win as many games as the fat-cat NY Yankees. Using detailed statistical analysis created by baseball fans like Bill James who wanted to know how to make better teams in their fantasy baseball leagues, Oakland GM Billy Beane drafted or traded for players other teams considered sub-standard or worn-out and Oakland became a post-season threat despite having the second lowest payroll in the major leagues.

Systems Thinking

Thinking in Bets: Making Smarter Decisions When You Don't Have All the Facts

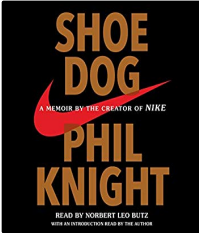
Annie Duke // New York: Penguin, 2018



Annie Duke, a former World Series of Poker champion turned business consultant, draws on examples from business, sports, politics, and poker to share tools anyone can use to embrace uncertainty and make better decisions. For most people, it's difficult to say "I'm not sure" in a world that values, and even rewards, the appearance of certainty. But professional poker players are comfortable with the fact that great decisions don't always lead to great outcomes and bad decisions don't always lead to bad outcomes.

Shoe Dog: A Memoir by the Creator of Nike

Phil Knight // New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016

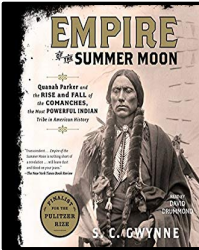


In this candid and riveting memoir, for the first time ever, Nike founder and CEO Phil Knight shares the inside story of the company's early days as an intrepid start-up and its evolution into one of the world's most iconic, game-changing, and profitable brands. In 1962, fresh out of business school, Phil Knight borrowed fifty dollars from his father and created a company with a simple mission: import high-quality, low-cost athletic shoes from Japan. Selling the shoes from the trunk of his lime-green Plymouth Valiant, Knight grossed \$8,000 his first year. Today, Nike's annual sales top \$30 billion.

History

Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History

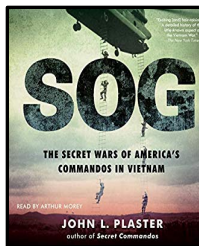
S.C. Gwynne // New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016



Empire of the Summer Moon spans two astonishing stories. The first traces the rise and fall of the Comanches, the most powerful Indian tribe in American history. The second entails one of the most remarkable narratives ever to come out of the Old West: the epic saga of the pioneer woman Cynthia Ann Parker and her mixed-blood son, Quanah, who became the last and greatest chief of the Comanches. The war with the Comanches lasted four decades, in effect holding up the development of the new American nation.

SOG: The Secret Wars of America's Commandos in Vietnam

John L. Plaster // New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997



Code-named the Studies and Observations Group, SOG was the most secret elite US military unit to serve in the Vietnam War - so secret that its very existence was denied by the government. Composed entirely of volunteers from such ace fighting units as the Army Green Berets, Air Force Air Commandos, and Navy SEALs, SOG took on the most dangerous covert assignments in the deadliest and most forbidding theaters of operation.

VERITAS ET LIBERTAS



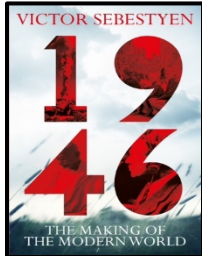


The Commandant's Professional Reading List

August 2020 – July 2021

1946: The Making of the Modern World

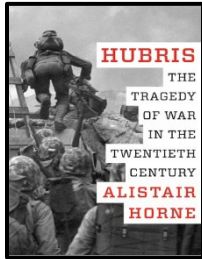
Victor Sebestyen [History, Nonfiction, Politics]



In this remarkable history, the foreign correspondent and historian Victor Sebestyen draws on contemporary documents from around the world - including Stalin's briefing notes for the Potsdam peace conference - to examine what lay behind the political decision-making. Sebestyen uses a vast array of archival material and personal testimonies to explore how the lives of generations of people across continents were shaped by the events of 1946.

Hubris: The Tragedy of War in the Twentieth Century

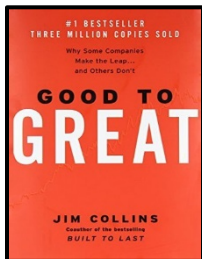
Alistair Horne [Military History, War, Culture]



The legendary historian and author of *A Savage War of Peace*, Sir Alistair Horne has been a close observer of war and history for more than fifty years. In this wise and masterly work that he calls his “summa,” he revisits six battles of the past century and examines the strategies, leadership, preparation, and geopolitical goals of aggressors and defenders, to reveal the one trait that links them all: hubris.

Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't

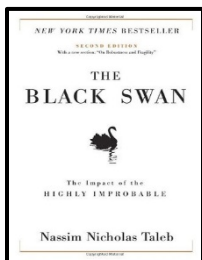
James C. Collins [Leadership, Business, Management]



Using tough benchmarks, Collins and his research team identified a set of elite companies that made the leap to great results and sustained those results for at least fifteen years. How great? After the leap, the good-to-great companies generated cumulative stock returns that beat the general stock market by an average of seven times in fifteen years, better than twice the results delivered by a composite index of the world's greatest companies.

The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable

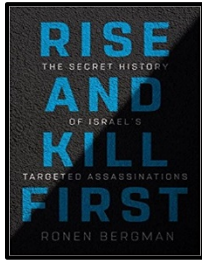
Nassim Nicholas Taleb [Economics, Philosophy, Psychology]



A black swan is a highly improbable event with three principal characteristics: It is unpredictable; it carries a massive impact; and, after the fact, we concoct an explanation that makes it appear less random, and more predictable, than it was. The astonishing success of Google was a black swan; so was 9/11. For Nassim Nicholas Taleb, black swans underlie almost everything about our world, from the rise of religions to events in our own personal lives.

Rise and Kill First: The Secret History of Israel's Targeted Assassinations

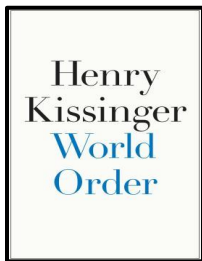
Ronen Bergman [History, Politics, War]



Journalist and military analyst Ronen Bergman offers a riveting inside account of the targeted killing programs—their successes, their failures, and the moral and political price exacted on the men and women who approved and carried out the missions. Bergman has gained the exceedingly rare cooperation of many current and former members of the Israeli government, as well as high-level figures in the country's military and intelligence services.

World Order

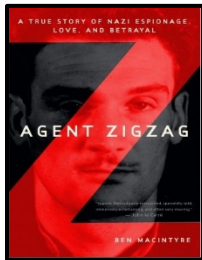
Henry Kissinger [History, Political Science, International Relations]



Kissinger offers a deep meditation on the roots of international harmony and global disorder. Drawing on his experience as one of the foremost statesmen of the modern era—advising presidents and observing and shaping the central foreign policy events of recent decades—Kissinger now reveals his analysis of the ultimate challenge for the twenty-first century: how to build a shared international order in a world of divergent historical perspectives, conflict, proliferating technology, and extremism.

Agent Zigzag: A True Story of Nazi Espionage, Love, and Betrayal

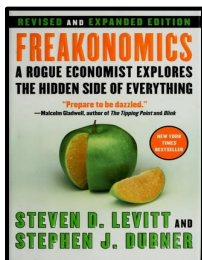
Ben Macintyre [History, Biography, War]



In 1941, after training as a German spy in occupied France, Eddie Chapman was parachuted into Britain with a revolver, a wireless, and a cyanide pill, with orders from the Abwehr to blow up an airplane factory. Instead, he contacted MI5, the British Secret Service. For the next four years, Chapman worked as a double agent, a lone British spy at the heart of the German Secret Service who at one time volunteered to assassinate Hitler for his countrymen.

Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything

Steven D. Levitt, Stephen J. Dubner [Economics, Business, Psychology]



Which is more dangerous, a gun or a swimming pool? What do schoolteachers and sumo wrestlers have in common? Why do drug dealers still live with their moms? How much do parents really matter? Freakonomics establishes this unconventional premise: If morality represents how we would like the world to work, then economics represents how it actually does work. It will literally redefine the way we view the modern world.

