



Forces Command

Professional Reading List 2017

Headquarters Forces Command

August 2017

Serving our Nation

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Foreword

This Reading List is offered as a means through which the people of Forces Command and Army can increase their understanding of military history and strategy, global strategic issues, leadership, and innovation. It provides a forum through which people can participate in the 'contest for ideas' that will shape the future of the Australian Army.

The selected titles are intentionally broad in their scope and topics to encourage personnel to participate in professional discourse with their peers and teams. I encourage all personnel to read widely and actively participate in developing the narrative that will describe the future of Army.

Innovation and modernisation within Army is not just about equipment. Innovation needs to include the introduction of new ideas, methods and processes. This reading provides a forum within which new and innovative ideas can be raised and debated. Likewise, decision superiority is not simply achieved by procuring increasingly networked systems. The foundation of decision superiority is an educated Army that understands the enduring lessons of war and can recognise opportunity when it arises; 'fortune favours the prepared mind.'

I urge you to take an active role in defining the narrative that describes the future of Army and to continue to develop your minds through professional discourse and learning.



FA McLachlan, AM
Major General
Commander Forces Command

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Master reading list

Strategy and the art of war

The Art of War

Sun Tzu, translated by Samuel Griffith

Written in China over two thousand years ago, Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* provides the first known attempt to formulate a rational basis for the planning and conduct of military operations. These wise, aphoristic essays contain timeless principles acted upon by such twentieth-century Chinese leaders as Mao Zedong.

On War

Carl von Clausewitz, edited and translated by Michael Howard & Peter Paret

This edition of *On War*, the third English version published, is easily the best. In this indexed edition, Howard and Paret have taken care to provide an accurate translation from the original 1832 version. *On War* represents one of the greatest works on military thought and strategy ever written and contains ideas and concepts that apply at either the operational or the national level. Clausewitz remains essential reading for all senior leaders.

An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa, 1942–1943

Rick Atkinson

In the first volume of his highly anticipated Liberation Trilogy series, Atkinson shows why no modern reader can understand the ultimate victory of the Allied Powers in May 1945 without a solid understanding of the events that took place in North Africa in 1942 and early 1943. He convincingly demonstrates that the first years of the Allied war effort were a pivotal point in American history—the moment when the United States began to act like a great military power. He also chronicles without apology the many false steps taken before the new and untested US Army could emerge as a coherent and capable force.

Intelligence in War: Knowledge of the Enemy from Napoleon to Al-Qaeda

John Keegan

Keegan brings to life the split-second decisions that went into waging war before the benefit of aerial surveillance and electronic communications. He explains how espionage and decryption have changed the face of battle, such as thwarting the Japanese attack on Midway by an early warning. Keegan illustrates that timely information is only the beginning of decision making during war, where brute force is often more critical.

Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War

Robert Coram

The author recounts the life of US Air Force Colonel (Ret.) John Boyd (1927–1997), who was a brilliant fighter pilot, tactician, and strategist. Colonel Boyd wrote the first manual on jet aerial combat, which proved to be instrumental in redesigning the Air Force after the Vietnam War and led to success in Desert Storm. His writings and theories on military strategy remain influential today, particularly his concept of the Observation, Orientation, Decision, Action (OODA) Loop, which all the military services and many business strategists use to this day.

The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War

Robert B Strassler

This is an annotated, new translation of the classic Greek historian's account of the war between Athens and Sparta fought between 431 and 404 BCE. It has explanatory footnotes and appendixes on war and society in fifth-century BCE Greece that does much to place the war in context. The Peloponnesian War is not only an excellent chronicle of ancient warfare, but it is also a thoughtful dissertation on the relationship between politics and war, government and empire, and the strong and the weak. This volume should be on every Soldier's and diplomat's bookshelf.

Tip of the Spear: US Army Small-Unit Action in Iraq, 2004–2007

Jon THoffman

This is a collection of short combat action studies from the war in Iraq that took place during the growing insurgency that followed the highly successful invasion and initial occupation of the country in 2003. Each account illustrates the everyday challenges that US Soldiers faced in the struggle against an inventive and elusive enemy. The stories also highlight the personal bravery, resourcefulness, and courage of modern service personnel as they adapt to the constantly changing circumstances that existed in Iraq at the time.

Modern Strategy

Colin Grey

This work explains the permanent nature, but ever-changing character, of strategy in light of the whole strategic experience of the 20th century. The book is a contribution to the general theory of strategy; it makes sense of the strategic history of the 20th century and provides understanding of what that strategic history implies for the century to come.

Touched with Fire: The Land War in the South Pacific

Eric M Bergerud

The land battles of the South Pacific fought between July 1942 and early 1944 on the Solomon Islands and New Guinea were 'a ferocious slugging match between light-infantry armies at extremely close quarters'. Written in a clear and engaging style and drawing upon many insightful interviews with veterans, *Touched with Fire* offers a vivid and fascinating look at small-unit combat in the South Pacific that will be of great interest to personnel across all ranks.

Pacific Blitzkrieg: World War II in the Central Pacific

Sharon Tosi Lacey

Pacific Blitzkrieg closely examines the planning, preparation, and execution of ground operations from five major invasions in the Central Pacific (Guadalcanal, Tarawa, the Marshalls, Saipan, and Okinawa). The book provides an insight into the efforts by commanders on the ground to integrate the US Army and Marine Corps into a single striking force, and demonstrates how success in the Pacific theatre relied on this crucial, if somewhat strained partnership.

Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla

David Kilcullen

Former Australian Army officer David Kilcullen, one of the world's leading experts on current and future conflict, offers a ground breaking look at what may happen after today's wars end. This is a book about future conflicts and future cities, and about the challenges and opportunities that four powerful megatrends— population, urbanisation, coastal settlement and connectedness—are creating across the planet. And it is about what cities, communities and businesses can do to prepare for a future in which all aspects of human society—including, but not limited to, conflict, crime and violence—are changing at an unprecedented pace.

The Story of the Malakand Field Force

Winston Churchill

Based on his own experiences of the 1897 campaign on the North-West frontier (in vicinity of the modern border regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan), in which he served as both a cavalry officer and newspaper correspondent, this was Churchill's first published book. His incisive chronicling of events reflects his grasp of the situation, and the energy and vision that were trademarks of his leadership during World War II.

Concrete Hell: Urban Warfare from Stalingrad to Iraq

Lou DiMarco

DiMarco provides a detailed study of the realities of urban warfare, and argues convincingly that as we live in an increasingly urbanising world a military unprepared for urban operations is unprepared for tomorrow. His analysis of the successes and failure of some of the most significant urban operations in modern military history including Stalingrad, Hue City and Fallujah, provides valuable lessons for current military professionals to apply.

Globalisation and the world

The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order

Samuel P Huntington

In this controversial and landmark work, the late Harvard social scientist Huntington, warns of the increasing threat of renewed conflicts originating in countries and cultures that base their traditions on religious faith and dogma. Moving past the issues of race and nationality as sources of future conflict, he cites the growing influence of a handful of major cultures—Western, Eastern Orthodox, Latin American, Islamic, Japanese, Chinese, Hindu, and African—in current struggles across the globe. His study underlines the importance of cultural awareness in dealing with crises throughout the globe and the significant role that awareness plays in implementing effective policies and programs on the ground.

Descent into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia

Ahmed Rashid

Rashid, a Pakistani journalist and author describes how the war against Islamic extremism is being lost in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and central Asia. He examines the region and the corridors of power in Washington and Europe to see how the promised nation building in these countries has progressed. His conclusions are devastating: an unstable and nuclear armed Pakistan, a renewed al-Qaeda profiting from a booming opium trade, and a Taliban resurgence and reconquest. He argues that failing states within the region a graver threat to global security than is currently understood by policy makers in the West.

The Quest: Energy, Security, and the Remaking of the Modern World

Daniel Yergin

For the past twenty years, Yergin has been widely recognised as the most authoritative voice on the geopolitics of energy and resource competition. This book is considered the most comprehensive, and current work now available on the topic and will likely stand as the definitive work for the indefinite future. It not only explains the deeper history of energy production and the dramatic changes of the past decade, but also provides valuable policy advice for minimizing the potential for catastrophic disruptions in energy security and the conflicts this could produce.

The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World

Rupert Smith

Drawing on his experience as a commander during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Northern Ireland, Smith, a retired British general, gives the reader a probing analysis of modern war and questions why the West tries to use military force to solve political problems. He demonstrates why today's conflicts must be understood as intertwined political and military events and makes clear why the current model of total war has failed in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other recent campaigns.

The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century

Thomas L Friedman

Friedman, a respected foreign affairs commentator and New York Times columnist sees the globalisation process entering an entirely new phase. Advances in information technologies, an intensified world division of labour, stepped-up competition, and economic practices such as outsourcing have joined with the political opening of the world following the collapse of communism to produce a progressive 'flattening' of the world. The author believes that states and individuals have no option but to accept this dynamic and develop the skills to survive the flattened world.

On China

Henry Kissinger

In this sweeping and insightful history, drawing on historical records as well as his own conversations with Chinese leaders over the past forty years, Kissinger examines how China has approached diplomacy, strategy, and negotiation throughout its history, and reflects on the consequences for the global balance of power in the 21st Century.

Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam

Gilles Kepel

Kepel argues the recent ascendance of militant Islam to a Western audience and argues that the terrorism we see today stems from the failure of Islamic fundamentalism, not its success. This book covers the growth and struggle of political Islam throughout the world, and places events such as 11 September 2001 in a historical and socio-political context.

How Asia Works: Success and Failure in the World's Most Dynamic Region

Joe Studwell

Studwell distills his extensive research into the economies of nine countries—Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam, and China—into an accessible, readable narrative that debunks Western misconceptions of the region, shows what really happened in Asia and why, and makes clear why some countries have boomed while others have languished.

Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power

Robert D Kaplan

Kaplan provides a sweeping examination of the countries that compose 'Monsoon Asia'—China, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Burma, Oman, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Tanzania. As great power competition in the region increases, Kaplan's perspective on the implications of rising powers, the shifting global balance, and the potential contingencies that might arise is timely and important.

Creating Kosovo

Elton Skendaj

Skendaj's study explores the efforts by international actors to rebuild, and in some cases create, the institutions of a functioning, modern state in the newly independent Kosovo. He explores the multitude of factors behind why some efforts were successful and others dismal failures. Given both the Australian Army's recent operational history and the potential for future similar commitments, Skendaj's work is a valuable addition to the available literature on the subject.

Leadership

Leading Change

John P Kotter

In this now-classic book on leadership, Kotter describes a proven eight-step change process: establishing a sense of urgency, creating the guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the change vision, empowering others to act, creating short-term wins, consolidating gains and producing even more change, and institutionalizing new approaches in the future. Leaders at all levels will find his methodology useful to assist in leading complex organisations through uncertainty and difficult circumstances.

Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It

James M Kouzes & Barry Z Posner

After thirty years of research, Kouzes and Posner conclude that credibility is the cornerstone of leadership. Leaders must 'say what you mean and mean what you say'. In their book the authors examine how military leaders cannot achieve their potential without considering and addressing the expectations of those whom they lead.

The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300–2050

MacGregor Knox & Williamson Murray

Knox and Murray provide a conceptual framework and historical context for understanding the patterns of change, innovation and adaptation that have marked war in the Western world since the fourteenth century. Case studies and a conceptual overview offer all leaders a valuable introduction to military change.

On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society

Dave Grossman

Grossman's work, exploring the psychology of the act of killing and Western military establishments' attempt to understand and deal with the consequences of killing, still stands out among the literature on the subject.

The Passion of Command: The Moral Imperative of Leadership

Bryan McCoy

The author, who served as a USMC infantry battalion commander in both the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the 1st Battle of Fallujah in April 2004, relays his innermost thoughts and feelings, drawing on his own experiences of personal leadership. Emotionally riveting, *The Passion of Command* provides a valuable insight into the modern, Western military culture and allows the reader to grasp the complexities required to harden the mind, body and spirit for the rigours of combat.

So Now You're a Leader: 10 Precepts of Practical Leadership

Peter Stokes & John James

A readable and concise introduction to the subject, suitable for all levels, *So Now You're a Leader* bridges the gap between leadership theory and the day-to-day reality of being a leader. It is full of practical, factual examples and anecdotes that can easily be related to the precepts espoused in the book, and to current theories that are otherwise often presented in a dry and complex manner.

Common Sense Training: A Working Philosophy for Leaders

Arthur Collins

Collins wrote this study post his retirement from the US Army as a Lieutenant General, after a career spanning Battalion command in the Second World War to Division and subsequently Corps-level command in Vietnam. In lucid, clever prose punctuated by terrific anecdotes and provocative examples, Lieutenant General Collins describes his observations on the importance of thorough and realistic training, particularly at the sub-unit and unit level. While some aspects of this work are dated and specific to the US Army, the fundamentals of what he examines remain true to the challenges confronting the Australian Army of today.

Ethics

The Morality of War

Brian Orend

An exploration of how Just War theory' has changed through history and how it might apply in the modern world. It includes discussion of the problems of terrorism and pre-emptive self-defence as well as the main alternatives to just war theory: realism and pacifism.

The Code of the Warrior

Shannon French

An examination of warrior codes through history, from ancient times through to modern terrorists. The central questions examined are: 'Why do warriors need codes of behaviour, why were such codes important in the past, and are such codes still relevant today?'

Australian military history

A Military History of Australia

Jeffery Grey

Grey provides a detailed chronological narrative of Australia's wars across more than two hundred years, set in the contexts of defence and strategic policy, the development of society and the impact of war and military service on Australia and Australians. It discusses the development of the armed forces as institutions and examines the relationship between governments and military policy. Grey's work is the only comprehensive, single-volume treatment of the role and development of Australia's military and their involvement in war and peace across the span of Australia's modern history.

A Different Sort of War: Australians in Korea, 1950–1953

Richard Trembath

The Korean War, 1950–1953, occupies a doubtful position in contemporary history and also in Australian military tradition. For Australia, the Korean War meant having to make difficult choices about participation and the scale of our participation. Much of the book looks at the experiences of those who served in Korea. The book lays bare the motivation of these men as well as their experiences of combat, the landscape, other cultures, friend and enemy, and significantly, whether these servicemen saw their contribution to the Korean war as significant and as having meaning.

All Day Long the Noise of Battle

Gerard Windsor

Windsor examines in detail the actions of a single Australian rifle company from 7 RAR on operations in South Vietnam in early 1968, focussing on a specific three day engagement in an enemy bunker system. Along with a great many sharply observed comments about the nature of combat and the relationships forged between soldiers involved, he offers compelling analysis of the stresses and challenges of command in an Australian infantry battalion at every level from the section corporals to the unit commanding officer.

Afghan Sun: Defence, Diplomacy, Development and the Taliban

Stuart Yeaman

Using his own experience as the Commanding Officer of Reconstruction Task Force IV, Yeaman provides a compelling account of modern Australian soldiers living and fighting during the summer of 2008 in Uruzgan province. A stand out among the titles starting to emerge that cover Australia's involvement in Afghanistan, readers are able to glimpse how the war was managed and conducted from the perspective of one of the commanders on the ground.

Land warfare

Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle

Stephen Biddle

Biddle analyses the emergence from the carnage of the Western Front in 1917 of what he terms 'the modern system' of combined arms warfare. He produces compelling statistical evidence to analyse success in battle since 1917 and concludes that a thorough grasp of the modern system of combined arms fighting is a core element of professional mastery.

Battle Studies: Ancient and Modern Battle

Ardant du Picq

An officer with nearly 30 years experience in the Crimea, Syria and Algeria, du Picq was killed leading his men against the Prussians in 1870. This French classic examines the moral force and psychological endurance of soldiers in battle, demonstrating that the human elements of war are eternal factors in defeat and victory. *Battle Studies* advocates the importance of unit discipline and cohesion, especially important to du Picq as he experienced and analysed first-hand the increasing lethality of battlefield firepower.

Logistics

Pure Logistics: The Science of War Preparation

George C Thorpe

Although first published in 1917, Thorpe was well ahead of his time in his perception of the place of logistics in development and projection of military power. He identified logistics as a distinctive branch of warfare—one of equal importance to strategy and tactics—and understood the need to address logistics at the national defence level.

Feeding Mars: Logistics in Western Warfare from the Middle Ages to the Present

John A Lynn

This volume brings together short accessible chapters on logistic issues across 1500 years of experience. Lynn notes that 'Mars must be fed', and that while logistic needs have changed across time (though not as much as might be supposed), logistics has always been a key determinant of both strategy and operations.

Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton

Martin van Creveld

Surveying four centuries of military history, noted historian Martin van Creveld clearly points out the reasons 'amateurs study tactics; professionals study logistics'. In engaging prose, he demonstrates the critical importance of logistical planning and preparations to tactical and operational success.

Cyber, science and technology

Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know

PW Singer & A Friedman

A fascinating and well-written examination of the technology that supports modern society. The authors discuss how cyberspace and security work, how they affect us, and what every citizen, and especially every military professional, should know.

Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century

PW Singer

Singer provides an exploration of the impact of robotics on warfare, surmising that it will have as revolutionary an effect as atomic weapons or gunpowder. He discusses the influence of new military technology on the ways war is fought and the effect robots will have on the future battlefield, as well as the ramifications robotic warfare will have on ethics, law, politics and economics.

Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything

Steven D Levitt & Stephen J Dubner

Backed up by the painstaking analysis of statistical evidence the authors provide a fresh approach to the examination of a wide variety of contemporary issues—from cheating and crime to sports and child-rearing. Their conclusions turn conventional wisdom on its head, and demonstrate the importance of approaching problem solving with an open mind.

Countdown to Zero Day: Stuxnet and the Launch of the World's First Digital Weapon

Kim Zetter

Zetter provides a compelling exploration behind the highly secretive joint United States and Israeli effort to cripple the Iranian nuclear program using what became known as the Stuxnet virus. As the first known example of a computer code that reached beyond the computers it targeted to physically destroy the equipment those computers controlled, Stuxnet gave the world its first look at the scope and sophistication of nation-state surveillance and warfare in the digital age.

Warrior Geeks

Christopher Coker

Coker examines how technology is transforming the way we think about and fight war, taking three major changes that are driving this process: cybernetic technologies that are folding soldiers into a cybernetic system that will allow the military to read their thoughts and emotions and mould them accordingly; the coexistence of men and robots in the battle-spaces of tomorrow; and the extent to which we may be able to re-engineer warriors through pharmacological manipulation. He explores the dangers of how an increasing reliance on technology in war may lead to the devaluing of our own humanity.

Contemporary warfare

Black Hearts: One Platoon's Descent Into Madness in Iraq's Triangle of Death

Jim Frederick

Frederick examines the story behind the one of the worst atrocities perpetrated by coalition forces during the war in Iraq. He analyses how systemic failures in leadership contributed to the downward spiral of one US Army platoon into poor discipline, substance abuse, brutality, rape and murder. A compelling read for all professional military, demonstrating the criticality of ethical leadership.

Unrestricted Warfare: China's Master Plan to Destroy America

Qiao Liang, Wang Xiangsui and Al Santoli

A fascinating example of how different cultures approach war, this work analyses the Chinese 'Unrestricted Warfare' manual, shedding light on Chinese strategic and operational methodology.

The War I Always Wanted: The Illusion of Glory and the Reality of War: A Screaming Eagle in Afghanistan and Iraq

Brandon Friedman

Friedman provides an intensely personal perspective of his own experience from joining the pre-9/11 US military, to operational deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan.

British Generals in Blair's Wars

Jonathan Bailey, Richard Iron & Hew Strachan

The authors provide a unique perspective on Britain's recent operational history, drawn primarily from first-hand testimony by senior participants. In addition to touching on themes such as civilian-military relations, the operational direction of war and relationships with allies, these eyewitness accounts give a real sense of how the character of a war changes even as it is being fought.

We Were One: Shoulder to Shoulder with the Marines Who Took Fallujah

Patrick O'Donnell

Based on the authors' experience as an embedded journalist during the Second Battle of Fallujah, the work focuses on the tactical level of war in Iraq, providing a valuable insight into the realities of modern urban operations.

Blood Year: The Unravelling of Western Counterterrorism

David Kilcullen

Kilcullen illustrates how the policies of Western governments since the end of the Cold War have helped erode overall global security, culminating in the astonishing rise of Islamic State in the northern summer of 2014.

The Young Officers' Reading Club: Killing Time and Fighting Wars

Patrick Hennessey

Patrick Hennessey is a graduate in his 20s. He reads Graham Greene, listens to early-90s house on his iPod and watches Vietnam movies. He has also, as an officer in the Grenadier Guards, fought in some of the most violent combat the British army has seen in a generation. This is the story of how a modern soldier is made, from the testosterone-heavy breeding ground of Sandhurst to the nightmare of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Classics

The Face of Battle A Study Of Agincourt, Waterloo And The Somme

John Keegan

The Face of Battle is military history from the battlefield: a look at the direct experience of individuals at 'the point of maximum danger'. It examines the physical conditions of fighting, the particular emotions and behaviour generated by battle, as well as the motives that impel soldiers to stand and fight rather than run away.

A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945

Trevor Dupuy

In a very comprehensive study across 150 years, Colonel T. N. Dupuy uses his experience in the US Army to explain the manoeuvres and characters behind German warfare in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is the General Staff who influence the performance of the Army, institutionalising military excellence in direct and indirect ways. An accessible account of the origins of excellence in the German General Staff.

The Art of Manoeuvre

Robert R Leonard

The Art of Maneuver is an important theoretical study of an issue that is currently the subject of much discussion in professional military journals and symposia. Suitable for the combat team level commander who wants to better understand manoeuvre theory – and be able to teach it to his team

Panzer Leader

Heinz Guderian

General Heinz Guderian's revolutionary strategic vision and his skill in armoured combat brought Germany its initial victories during World War II. Combining Guderian's land offensive with Luftwaffe attacks, the Nazi Blitzkrieg decimated the defences of Poland, Norway, France—and, very nearly, Russia—at the war's outset. But in 1941, when Guderian advised that ground forces should take a step back, Hitler dismissed him. In these pages, the outspoken general shares his candid point of view on what would have led Germany to victory, and what ensured that it didn't.

The German Generals Talk

BH Liddell Hart

The German Generals who survived Hitler's Reich talk over World War II with Capt. Liddell Hart, noted British military strategist and writer. They speak as professional soldiers to a man they know and respect. For the first time, answers are revealed to many questions raised during the war. Was Hitler the genius of strategy he seemed to be at first? Why did his Generals never overthrow him? Why did Hitler allow the Dunkirk evacuation? What did the Russians and Allies look like from the German side? And what are the advantages and disadvantages under which dictator-controlled armies fight?

The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World

Rupert Smith

"War no longer exists," writes General Sir Rupert Smith, powerfully reminding us that the clash of mass national armies, the system of war since Napoleon, will never occur again. Instead, he argues that we must be prepared to adapt tactics to each conflict, or lose the ability to protect ourselves and our way of life. From Iraq to the Balkans, and from Afghanistan to Chechnya, Smith charts a stream of armed interventions that have failed to deliver on promises of resolution. He demonstrates why today's conflicts must be understood as intertwined political and military events. He makes clear why the current one-size-fits-all model of total war, fought out on battlefields, that politicians still cling to must be abandoned in favour of new strategies that take into account the fact that wars are now fought among civilian populations. And he offers a compelling new model for how to fight these battles and secure our world.

Faith of My Fathers

John McCain

Senator John McCain learned about life and honour from his grandfather and father, both four-star admirals in the U.S. Navy. Both their careers and their courage helped prepare McCain for the biggest challenge of his life when, as a naval aviator, he was shot down over Hanoi in 1967 and seriously injured. When his captors realized McCain's impressive military legacy, they offered him early release. In what has now become a legendary act of heroism, McCain refused the offer and was subsequently tortured, held in solitary confinement, and imprisoned for more than five years.

Thinking and innovation

The Logic of Failure

Dietrich Dörner

Dörner identifies what he calls the ‘logic of failure’—certain tendencies in patterns of thought that, while appropriate to an older, simpler world, prove disastrous for the complex modern world. Working with imaginative and often hilarious computer simulations, he analyses the roots of catastrophe, showing city planners in the very act of creating gridlock and disaster, or public health authorities setting the scene for starvation. The Logic of Failure is a compass for intelligent planning and decision-making highly relevant to military professionals.

A Whack on the Side of the Head—How you can be more creative

Roger von Oech

Critical and creative thinking are the hallmarks of military genius, and this book provides simple exercises and explanations to help people break free of constrained thinking patterns.

Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking

Malcolm Gladwell

Gladwell explains how we ‘think without thinking’, about choices that seem to be made in an instant that actually aren’t as simple as they seem. He examines why some individuals appear to be intuitively brilliant decision makers, following their instincts to continual advantage, while others end up stumbling into error.

Seizing the White Space: Business Model Innovation for Growth and Renewal

Mark W Johnson

Although written for a private sector audience, the lessons and processes identified by Johnson to harness ‘transformational growth’ are equally applicable to the fostering of innovation within a military context.

Thinkertoys: A Handbook of Creative Thinking Techniques

Michael Michalko

From the linear to the intuitive, this comprehensive handbook details ingenious creative-thinking techniques for approaching problems in unconventional ways. Applicable to problem solving in a military context, Michalko’s techniques demonstrate how to look at the same information as others and identify alternative

solutions.

Fiction

The Killer Angels

Michael Shaara

Michael Shaara's work portrays the Battle of Gettysburg, the turning point in the American Civil War, and examines the conflict on many levels. The author explores the motivations of the leaders and their soldiers, and contrasts the fortunes of the poorly supplied but buoyant Confederacy, and the superbly equipped but demoralised Union. At the end of the battle, it is the professional Union commanders who have won—fighting a battle that maximised the value of the terrain and firepower. The idealists and romantics of the book, like the Confederate General Lee, succeed only in wasting away their own forces by 'following their hearts'.

Starship Troopers

Robert A Heinlein

Heinlein graduated from the US Naval Academy in 1928 and continued his involvement with the military right through the Second World War. His award winning book explores profound territory—what makes a citizen and what is the military's responsibility to the state that supports it? A simple tale of a young man 100 — chief of army's reading list joining up and going to war with an alien race, 'the Bugs', hides layers of deep and complex moral and political philosophy, the core of which is the notion that social responsibility requires individual sacrifice.

Ender's Game

Orson Scott Card

Ender Wiggin is six years old when he is taken from his family and sent to Battle School, where he is taught the art and science of war. Ender's advantage is his creativity, and he rises to command of all of the Earth's military but at the expense of his physical and mental health. The book investigates the use of simulation and networked forces to select leaders and manage combat, and has a subtext about the burden of leadership and the importance in commanders of both compassion and ruthlessness.

Gates of Fire

Steven Pressfield

In 480 B.C., two million Persian invaders come to the mountain pass of Thermopylae in eastern Greece, where they are met by 300 Spartans warriors.

The Greek loyalists battle for six days in a prelude to their ultimate victory.

Ghost Fleet: A Novel of the Next World War

Peter W Singer

The United States, China, and Russia eye each other across a twenty-first century version of the Cold War, which suddenly heats up at sea, on land, in the air, in outer space, and in cyberspace. The fighting involves everything from stealthy robotic–drone strikes to old warships from the navy’s “ghost fleet.” Fighter pilots unleash a Pearl Harbor–style attack; American veterans become low-tech insurgents; teenage hackers battle in digital playgrounds; Silicon Valley billionaires mobilize for cyber-war; and a serial killer carries out her own vendetta. Ultimately, victory will depend on blending the lessons of the past with the weapons of the future.

The Forever War

John Halderman

The Earth's leaders have drawn a line in the interstellar sand—despite the fact that the fierce alien enemy that they would oppose is inscrutable, unconquerable, and very far away. A reluctant conscript drafted into an elite Military unit, Private William Mandella has been propelled through space and time to fight in the distant thousand-year conflict; to perform his duties without rancor and even rise up through military ranks. Pvt. Mandella is willing to do whatever it takes to survive the ordeal and return home. But "home" may be even more terrifying than battle, because, thanks to the time dilation caused by space travel, Mandella is aging months while the Earth he left behind is aging centuries.

Dog Company Six

Edward Simmons

A decorated veteran of three wars, and author of two nonfiction classics—*The Marines* and *The U.S. Marines: A History*—Edwin Howard Simmons has written a novel of the Korean War. Emotionally moving and intensely authentic, *Dog Company Six* is the story of George Bayard, a Marine reserve captain who is recalled to active duty for a command-and a challenge-he never would have chosen