Pursuing Excellence in the Fundamentals: Frontier Readers

Leaders are Readers. The U.S. Army's mission command philosophy, traces its roots to Prussian generals with a single idea as its bedrock – trust. Commanders give guidance and intent prior to execution, but it is trust in subordinates that gives commanders the confidence to boldly take decisive action. That culture of trust is still promulgated today at the United States Army Fires Center of Excellence and Fort Sill (USAFCoEFS). It is that same trust that builds and maintains cohesive teams throughout our ranks.

Today’s Army doctrine defines the Institutional, Operational, and Self-Development as the three domains in which Leader Development occurs. Self-development bridges the gap between the operational and institutional domains and sets conditions for continuous learning and growth, if you pursue it. The Army guides Leaders toward institutional (education) and operational (experience) development opportunities at an appointed season, but it’s the Leader's will and commitment to the Army profession that is a precursor to self-study. Self-study implies an ambitious curiosity that eclipses idly awaiting guidance to pursue professional and personal enrichment.

Precedent. Consider thoughts on reading from a few familiar names:

- General George S. Patton. As a young man, he stated “for it is beastly hard for me to learn and as a natural result I hate to study.” His will transformed this from an obstacle to an opportunity and he became an avid reader.

- Former Secretary of Defense General (Ret) James Mattis stated, “Thanks to my reading, I have never been caught flat-footed by any situation, never at a loss for how any problem has been addressed (successfully or unsuccessfully) before. It doesn’t give me all the answers, but it lights what is often a dark path ahead.”

- Adm. (Ret.) James Stavridis owns more than 4500 books and said “…you cannot be a learning organization without being a reading organization.”

- General Mark A. Milley, 20th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff stated, “…even as we train our units and physically condition our bodies, we must improve our minds through reading and critical thinking.”

Your Obligation to the Profession. If you aren't already reading, start now. I’ve enclosed many of the books I’ve read over the years and encourage you to use them as a start point. I’ve also included professional reading lists from other Senior Leaders. I encourage you to read fiction, non-fiction, and dig into Army and Joint doctrine. Have discussions as squads, sections, platoons, companies/batteries/battalions, and just do your part in getting better every single day as individuals and teams. Leaders are Readers!
Enclosure 1. Book List

**History**

*The Republic*, Plato  
*Plato and the Republic*, Nickolas Pappas  
*The Landmark Thucydides*, Ribert B. Strassler  
*Elementary Treatise on Advanced Guard, Outposts, and Detachment Service of Troops*, Mahan  
*Battle Studies: Ancient and Modern Battle*, Colonel Ardant du Picq  
*A Companion to American Military History Volume I & II*, Bradford  
*American Campaigns, 2 Vol.*, Matthew Forney Steele  
*The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard*, Arthur Conan Doyle  
*Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War*, Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch  
*The World Transformed*, George Bush and Brent Scowcroft  
*The Big Red One: America’s Legendary 1st Infantry Division from World War I to Desert Storm*, James Scott Wheeler  
*The Commanders*, Bob Woodward  
*Elusive Victories: The American Presidency at War*, Andrew J. Polsky  
*Presidents and Their Generals: An American History of Command in War*, Matthew Moten  
*Attacks: The Development of Tank Warfare*, Erwin Rommel  
*Presidential Decision for War: Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, and Iraq (The American Moment)*, Gary R. Hess

**Revolutionary War**

*1776*, David McCullough  
*Washington’s Crossing*, David Hackett Fischer  
*George Washington and Benedict Arnold: A Tale of Two Patriots*, Dave Richard Palmer  
*Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation*, Joseph J. Ellis

**Civil War**

*Two Views of Gettysburg*, Fremantle & Haskell  
*The Story of the Civil War*, Ropes & Livermore  
*The Long Roll*, Mary Johnston  
*Gods and Generals*, Jeff Shaara
Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era, James M. McPherson

**World War I**

The Guns of August, Barbara W. Tuchman
The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914, Margaret MacMillan
The Price of Glory: Verdun 1916, Alistair Horne
All Quiet on the Western Front, Erich M. Remarque
A Farewell to Arms, Ernest Hemingway

**World War II**

The Crisis, Winston Churchill
Eisenhower’s Lieutenants, Russell F. Weigley
The Greatest Generation, Tom Brokaw
Rick Atkinson; Guns at Last Light, The Day of Battle, An Army At Dawn
A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War, Murray, Millett
Ike and Monty, Generals at War, Norman Gelb
The Dead and Those About to Die D-Day: The Big Red One at Omaha Beach, John C. McManus
Citizens of London: The Americans Who Stood with Britain in Its Darkest, Finest Hour, Lynne Olson
Put on Your Boots and Parachutes! Personal Stories of the Veterans of the United States 82nd Airborne Division from the Second World War, Deryk Wills
Corps Commanders of the Bulge: Six American Generals and Victory in the Ardennes, Harold R. Winton

**Vietnam**

Duty, Honor, Vietnam, Prashker
A Vietnam Experience: 10 Years of Reflection, James B. Stockdale
A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam, Neil Sheehan

**Kosovo/Bosnia**
Writing on the Balkan War, Why Bosnia? Ali, Lifschultz

The Middle East
A Platoon Leader’s Tour, Pete Kilner
The War for Muslim Minds, Kepel
The Crisis of Islam, Bernard Lewis
A Vulcan’s Tale: How the Bush Administration Mismanaged the Reconstruction of Afghanistan, Zakheim
From Beirut to Jerusalem, Thomas L. Friedman
The Longest War, Peter L. Bergen
Imperial Life in the Emerald City, Rajiv Chandrasekaran
Little America, Rajiv Chandrasekaran
Shadow War: The Untold Story of How Bush Is Winning the War on Terror, Miniter
Iraq Full Circle, Darron L. Wright
The Endgame: The Inside Story of the Struggle for Iraq, from George W. Bush to Barack Obama, Michael R. Gordon, General Bernard E. Trainor
Imperial Hubris, Scheuer
Moving Mountains, William G. Pagonis, Jeffrey L. Cruikshank

Modern/Future Warfare
Breaking the Phalanx, Douglas Macgregor
Out of the Mountains, David Kilcullen
Future Crimes: Everything Is Connected, Everyone Is Vulnerable and What We Can Do About It, Marc Goodman
One Hundred Victories: Special Ops and the Future of American Warfare, Linda Robinson
About Face: The Odyssey of an American Warrior, Hackworth & Sherman
Sharp Corners: Urban Operations at Century’s End, Roger J. Spiller

The Army Profession

Command
Taking the Guidon, Burgess and Allen
Company Command, Meyer
The Challenge of Command: Reading for Military Excellence, Roger H. Nye
Masters of the Art of Command, Martin Blumenson
Small Unit Leadership, Dandridge M. Malone


**United States Military Academy**

The Long Gray Line, Rick Atkinson

Honor Bright: History and Origins of the West Point Honor Code and System, Lewis Sorley

West Point Leadership: Profiles of Courage, Daniel E. Rice

Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point, Ambrose

**General**

The Fourth Star: Four Generals and the Epic Struggle for the Future of the United States Army, Jaffe, Cloud

War, Morality, and the Military Profession, Wakin

American Generalship, Edgar Puryear

Four-Star Leadership for Leaders, R. Manning Ancell

Crisis in Command: Mismanagement in the Army, Richard A. Gabriel and Paul L. Savage

**Leadership, Management, and Ethics**

Simon Sinek: Start with Why, Leaders Eat Last, The Infinite Game

Malcolm Gladwell: Blink, Outliers, Tipping Point, David and Goliath, Talking to Strangers

Stephen R. Covey: The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, Principle-Centered Leadership

Thomas R. Peters: In Search of Excellence, A Passion for Excellence, Thriving on Chaos

Thinking, Fast and Slow, Kahneman

Good to Great, Collins

The Starfish and the Spider, Brafman and Beckstrom

Radical Inclusion, Dempsey

Black Hearts, Frederick

Just and Unjust Wars, Walzer

Leadership Lessons from General Ulysses S. Grant, Kaltman

Fooled by Randomness, Nassim Nicholas Taleb

Leadership: The Warrior’s Art, Christopher Kolenda

The Leader's Bookshelf, Stavridis Ancell

On the Profession of Management, Peter Drucker

Issues in Moral Philosophy, Donaldson

Leadership and Self-Deception, The Arbinger Institute
Getting to Yes, Fisher, Ury, Patton
Knowledge Leadership: The Art and Science of the Knowledge-based Organization, Cavaleri, Seivert, Lee
Drive The Surprising Truth About What Motivates People, Daniel H. Pink
Team of Teams, General Stanley McChrystal
Military Leadership In Pursuit of Excellence, Taylor
Making a Difference: Stories of Vision and Courage from America's Leaders, Chesley Sullenberger
Lead On! A Practical Approach to Leadership, Oliver
Face-To-Face Networking, Kathy Condon
Leaders, Buffet, Nanus
Drift, Rachel Maddow
Applying Moral Theories, C.E. Harris
Follow Me! Business Leadership Patton Style, Ridge
Perfect Strangers: Friendship, Strength, and Recovery After Boston’s Worst Day, Sdoia, Jordan
Why Success Always Starts with Failure, Tim Harford
Surviving the Shadows: A Journey of Hope into Post-Traumatic Stress, Delaney, Schreiber
The Ascent of a Leader, Thrall, McNicol, McElrath
The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle, J. Glenn Gray
Raving Fans: A Revolutionary Approach To Customer Service, Blanchard, Bowles
Seeing What Others Don’t, Gary Klein
The World is Flat, Thomas L. Friedman
Getting More of What you Want, Neale, Lys
I am John Galt: Today’s Heroic Innovators Building the World and the Villainous Parasites Destroying It, Luskin, Greta
Never Stop Learning, Bradley R. Staats
In Search of Excellence, Peters and Waterman
Young Men and Fire, Norman Maclean
In Search of Ethics, Marrella
Lincoln on Leadership, Donald T. Phillips
Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard, Chip Heath and Dan Heath
What it Takes to be Number One, Vince Lombardi
Legacy 15 Lessons In Leadership, James Kerr
Follow Me: The Human Element in Leadership, Aubrey S. Newman
Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done, Bossidy, Charan, Burck
Leading on Empty: Refilling Your Tank and Renewing Your Passion, Wayne Cordeiro
Our Sacred Honor: Words of Advice from the Founders in Stories, Letters, Poems, and Speeches, William J. Bennett

Knowledge and Power: The Information Theory of Capitalism and How it is Revolutionizing our World, Gilder

Presidential Courage: Brave Leaders and How They Changed America 1789-1989, Michael Beschloss

Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime, Cohen

The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America's Military, Dana Priest

The Generals, Thomas E. Ricks

**Biographies**

Grant, by Ron Chernow

*Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant*, Grant

U.S. Grant *The Civil War Years*, Bruce Catton

*George C. Marshall* (4-Part), Pogue

*George C. Marshall: Soldier Statesman of the American Century*, Mark A. Stoler

*Ike: An American Hero*, Korda

*John Adams*, McCullough

*Decision Points*, George W. Bush

*No Better Friend, No Worse Enemy: The Life of General James Mattis*, Jim Proser

*Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, Anne Frank

*Lincoln’s Sword*, Douglas L. Wilson

*Napoleon as General*, Count Yorck von Wartenburg

*Tacitus*

*Friedrich Nietzsche*

*Plato*

*Personal Memoirs of P.H. Sheridan*, Philip H. Sheridan

*The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan*, James Mann

*General Maxwell Taylor*, John M. Taylor

*The Accidental Admiral*, ADM. James Stavridis

*My American Journey*, Colin Powell

*It Worked for Me: In Life and Leadership*, Colin Powell

*Sniper Elite: The World of a Top Special Forces Marksman*, Rob Maylor

*Lincoln’s Last Days*, Bill O’Reilly

*Kennedy’s Last Days*, Bill O’Reilly
Duty, Robert M. Gates
At ease: Stories I Tell to Friends, Dwight D. Eisenhower
Theodore Roosevelt’s Darkest Journey, Candice Millard
Paratrooper: The Life of Gen James M Gavin, Booth & Spencer
American Soldier, Tommy R. Franks
General William C. Lee, Jerry Autry
Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West, Dale L. Morgan
There is no Alternative: Why Margaret Thatcher Matters, Claire Berlinski

**Strategy**

Winning the Long War, James Jay Carafano
The Long Art of War, Sun Tzu/Cleary
The Art of War, Sun Tzu
Descent into Chaos, Ahmed Rashid
The Art of War, Baron De Jomini
The Principles of War, Ferdinand Foch
Grand Strategies in War and Peace, Paul Kennedy
The Big Stick, Eliot A. Cohen
On Grand Strategy, John Lewis Gaddis
The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 20th Century, Hammes
Makers of Modern Strategy, Paret
On War, Clausewitz
Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought, Michael I. Handel
War and Anti-War: Survival at the Dawn of the 21st Century, Alvin and Heidi Toffler
Diplomacy, Henry Kissinger
Sources of Power, Klein
The Revenge of Geography, Robert D. Kaplan
Hubris: The Tragedy of War in the Twentieth Century, Alistair Horne
The Icarus Syndrome: A History of American Hubris, Peter Beinart
Rethinking the Principles of War, Mc Ivor
The Global Agenda, Kegley, Wittkopf
The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World, General Rupert Smith
Boomerang: Travels in the New Third World, Michael Lewis
The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War, Andrew J. Bacevich
**American National Security**, Meese, Nelson, Sondheimer

*America’s Promise Restored: Preventing Culture, Crusade and Partisanship from Wrecking Our Nation*, Harlan Ullman

*Longitudes and Attitudes: The World in the Age of Terrorism*, Thomas L. Friedman

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**Additional Resources**


Senior Enlisted Advisor to the CJCS Reading List: [https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/SEAC%20Reading%20List%202020.pdf?ver=2020-03-03-092320-813](https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/SEAC%20Reading%20List%202020.pdf?ver=2020-03-03-092320-813)


USSOCOM Commander Reading List: [https://jsou.libguides.com/readinglists](https://jsou.libguides.com/readinglists)

Marine Corps Commandant Reading List: [https://grc-usmcu.libguides.com/usmc-reading-list](https://grc-usmcu.libguides.com/usmc-reading-list)

DoD Reads Website ("The Voice of What DoD is Reading"): [https://www.dodreads.com/](https://www.dodreads.com/)

**this is a great website with multiple self-study tools available to leaders**