

The Company Leader

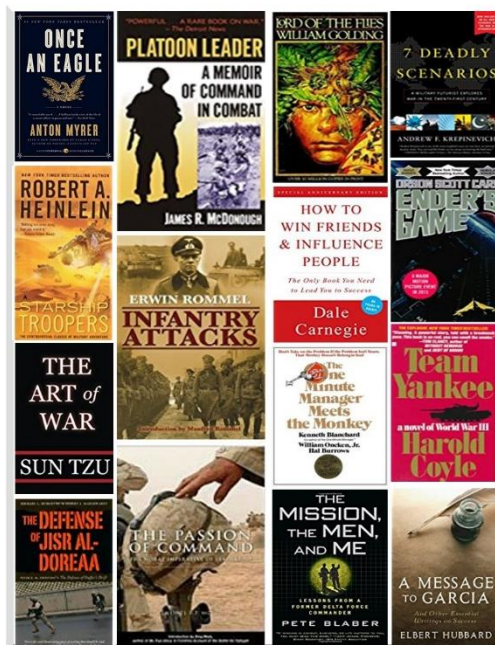
Leadership Lessons from the Tactical Level of War



Reading List

Reading Lists are very common to the Profession of Arms. I have never come across one that I did not like – at its worst it is a collection of books that I have already read or do not think apply. But, at its best, I find a treasure trove of new reading material. This reading list is not meant to be an end-all-be-all compilation of books to the profession. Instead, we focused on putting together a collection – limited to 15 – of books spanning history, fiction, and military, that provide a firm foundation for engaging leaders at the company-level. As a Commander, my Platoon Leaders and I strayed from this list at times tackling books like Pat Lencioni’s *The Ideal Team Player* and Jim Collin’s *Good to Great*. Let this be a starting place. Enjoy!

1. [*A Message to Garcia*](#). By Elbert Hubbard
2. [*Once an Eagle*](#). By Anton Myrer
3. [*Platoon Leader*](#). By James R. McDonough
4. [*Lord of the Flies*](#). By William Golding
5. [*Starship Troopers*](#). By Robert A. Heinlein
6. [*Ender’s Game*](#). By Orson Scott Card
7. [*7 Deadly Scenarios*](#). By Andrew Krepinevich
8. [*How to Win Friends and Influence People*](#). By Dale Carnegie
9. [*Infantry Attacks*](#). By Erwin Rommel
10. [*The One Minute Manager Meets the Monkey*](#). By Ken Blanchard & Will Oncken
11. [*The Art of War*](#). By Sun Tzu
12. [*The Mission, the Men, & Me*](#). By Pete Blaber
13. [*Team Yankee*](#). By Harold Coyle
14. [*The Passion of Command*](#). By COL B.P. McCoy
15. [*The Defense of Jisr al Doreaa*](#). By Michael Burgoyne and Albert Marckwardt



1. ***A Message to Garcia***. By Elbert Hubbard. One of the first inspirational essays ever devoted to business culture and the resolution of business-related conflicts, “A Message to Garcia” has a message still needed today. Some have confused it to forgive leaders who fail to communicate, but that misses the message. President McKinley communicated all of the information he had – the point is that Rowan didn’t waste time or energy focusing on what he wasn’t provided. He didn’t have a fixed mindset. He took action, he broke through barriers, and he demonstrated grit. Over a century old, “A Message to Garcia” remains tried and true advice on leadership and success, both in matters of business and state.

2. ***Once an Eagle***. By Anton Myrer. ***Once an Eagle*** is the story of one special man, a soldier named Sam Damon, and his adversary over a lifetime, fellow officer Courtney Massengale. Damon is a professional who puts duty, honor, and the men he commands above self-interest. Massengale, however, brilliantly advances by making the right connections behind the lines and in Washington's corridors of power. Beginning in the French countryside during the Great War, the conflict between these adversaries solidifies in the isolated garrison life marking peacetime, intensifies in the deadly Pacific jungles of World War II, and reaches its treacherous conclusion in the last major battleground of the Cold War—Vietnam. This book has come under scrutiny on the Staff v. Command culture it can lead to, but the message is deeper. It isn’t Staff v. Command, it is Servant v. Self-Serving.

3. ***Platoon Leader***. By James R. McDonough. A remarkable memoir of small-unit leadership and the coming of age of a young soldier in combat in Vietnam.' "Using a lean style and a sense of pacing drawn from the tautest of novels, McDonough has produced a gripping account of his first command, a U.S. platoon taking part in the 'strategic hamlet' program. Rather than present a potpourri of combat yarns. McDonough has focused a seasoned storyteller’s eye on the details, people, and incidents that best communicate a visceral feel of command under fire. For the author’s honesty and literary craftsmanship, ***Platoon Leader*** seems destined to be read for a long time by second lieutenants trying to prepare for the future, veterans trying to remember the past, and civilians trying to understand what the profession of arms is all about.”—*Army Times*

4. ***Lord of the Flies***. By William Golding. ***Lord of the Flies*** is a provocative piece of canonical literature. Its brutal portrayal of the human condition and our nature, when left unchecked, provides a startling reality for young leaders. Originally published in 1954, William Golding's compelling story about a group of very ordinary small boys marooned on a coral island has become a modern classic. At first it seems as though it is all going to be great fun; but the fun before long becomes furious and life on the island turns into a nightmare of panic and death. As ordinary standards of behavior collapse, the whole world the boys know collapses with them—the world of cricket and homework and adventure stories—and another world is revealed beneath, primitive and terrible. Labeled a parable, an allegory, a myth, a morality tale, a parody, a political treatise, even a vision of the apocalypse – this book is an important read for Military Leaders who, when in war, are in an equal fight between the enemy and their own humanity. This provides an important perspective to keep in mind when leading a formation through the trials and hardships of combat.

5. ***Starship Troopers***. By Robert A. Heinlein. The first-person narrative is about a young soldier named Juan "Johnnie" Rico and his exploits in the Mobile Infantry, a futuristic military service branch equipped with powered armor. Rico's military career progresses from recruit to non-commissioned officer and finally to officer against the backdrop of an interstellar war between mankind and an arachnoid species known as "the Bugs". Rico and the other characters discuss moral and philosophical aspects of suffrage, civic virtue, juvenile delinquency, corporal punishment, capital punishment, and war.

6. ***Ender's Game***. By Orson Scott Card. In order to develop a secure defense against a hostile alien race's next attack, government agencies breed child geniuses and train them as soldiers. A brilliant young boy, Andrew "Ender" Wiggin lives with his kind but distant parents, his sadistic brother Peter, and the person he loves more than anyone else, his sister Valentine. Peter and Valentine were candidates for the soldier-training program but didn't make the cut--young Ender is the Wiggin drafted to the orbiting Battle School for rigorous military training. Ender's skills make him a leader in school and respected in the Battle Room, where children play at mock battles in zero gravity. Is Ender the military general Earth needs? But Ender is not the only result of the genetic experiments. The war with the Buggers has been raging for a hundred years, and the quest for the perfect military leader has been underway for almost as long. Ender's two older siblings are every bit as unusual as he is, but in very different ways. Between the three of them lie the abilities to remake a world. If the world survives, that is.

7. ***7 Deadly Scenarios***. By Andrew Krepinevich. A global pandemic finds millions swarming across the U.S. border. Major American cities are leveled by black-market nukes. China's growing civil unrest ignites a global showdown. Pakistan's collapse leads to a hunt for its nuclear weapons. What if the worst that could happen actually happens? How will we respond? Are we prepared? These are the questions Andrew F. Krepinevich asks—and answers—in this timely and often chilling book. As a military expert and consultant, Krepinevich must think the unthinkable based on the latest intelligence and geopolitical trends—and devise a response in the event our worst nightmares become reality. As riveting as a thriller, ***7 Deadly Scenarios*** reveals the forces—both overt and covert—that are in play; the real ambitions of world powers, terrorist groups, and rogue states; and the actions and counteractions both our enemies and our allies can be expected to take—and what we must do to prepare before it's too late. So why is a book with "strategy" written all over it featured on a Tactical Reading List? Because we need to build leaders who can think critically about deep problems, at the junior levels. When I am looking for a leader – I want to see a mind at work.

8. ***How to Win Friends and Influence People***. By Dale Carnegie. For more than sixty years the rock-solid, time-tested advice in this book has carried thousands of now famous people up the ladder of success in their business and personal lives. Now this previously revised and updated bestseller is available in trade paperback for the first time to help you achieve your maximum potential throughout the next century! Learn: * Three fundamental techniques in handling people * the six ways to make people like you * The twelve ways to win people to your way of thinking * The nine ways to change people without arousing resentment. Leadership is fundamentally about people, and this is a must read for any leader.

9. ***Infantry Attacks***. By Erwin Rommel. Few possessed vision for the field like German Field Marshall Erwin Rommel. ***Infantry Attacks*** was his seminal work, first published in 1937 as a journal-esque chronicle of the author's experiences in World War I. In it, he details lessons learned on the battlefield through detailed accounts of both circumstances, events, and tactical maneuvers and folly. It is widely read by Soldiers and military leaders from the time of its release up to the modern day. General George S. Patton was said to have been influenced by the text. In the George C. Scott portrayal of the U.S. General, upon viewing Rommel in action, "Patton" shouts out – "I read your book!" This is an absolute must read for any tactician and leader.

10. ***The One Minute Manager Meets the Monkey***. By Kenneth Blanchard & William Oncken. When a person goes to the boss with a problem and the boss agrees to do something about it, the monkey is off his back and onto the boss's. How can managers avoid these leaping monkeys? Here is priceless advice from three famous experts: how managers can meet their own priorities, give back other people's monkeys, and let them solve their own problems.

11. ***The Art of War***. By Sun Tzu. An ancient Chinese military treatise attributed to Sun Tzu, a high-ranking military general, strategist and tactician, and kindred to the Realpolitik of his time, termed in China as Legalism. The text is composed of 13 chapters, each of which is devoted to one aspect of warfare. It is commonly thought of as a definitive work on military strategy and tactics. It has been the most famous and influential of China's Seven Military Classics, and "for the last two thousand years it remained the most important military treatise in Asia, where even the common people knew it by name." It has had an influence on Eastern and Western military thinking, business tactics, legal strategy and beyond.

12. ***The Mission, the Men, & Me***. By Pete Blaber. As a commander of Delta Force-the most elite counter-terrorist organization in the world-Pete Blaber took part in some of the most dangerous, controversial, and significant military and political events of our time. Now he takes his intimate knowledge of warfare-and the heart, mind, and spirit it takes to win-and moves his focus from the combat zone to civilian life. As the smoke clears from exciting stories about never before-revealed top-secret missions that were executed all over the globe, readers will emerge wiser, more capable, and more ready for life's personal victories than they ever thought possible.

13. ***Team Yankee***. By Harold Coyle. During the second half of the Twentieth Century, East and West stood on the brink of war. Nowhere was this more evident than in Central Germany, where ten thousand tanks belonging to NATO stood ready to resist a ground attack spearheaded by forty thousand Warsaw Pact tanks. It was a war that never was. But what if it had? How would the opening days of World War III played out? ***Team Yankee***, presents a glimpse of what it would have been like for the soldiers who would have had to meet the relentless onslaught of Soviet and Warsaw Pact divisions. Using the geo-political and military scenarios described by General Sir John Hackett, former NORTHAG commander and author of 'World War Three; August 1985', Team Yankee follows the war as seen from the turret of Captain Sean Bannon's tank. Through Bannon's eyes, and those of the men belonging to his tank heavy combat team, the reader lives through the first fourteen days of World War III. The action is vivid and exciting, the tension palpable. Defeat and death are as close as victory.

14. ***The Passion of Command***. By COL B.P. McCoy. U.S. Marine Colonel B. P. McCoy expertly relays his innermost thoughts and feelings, drawing on his mastery of personal leadership. Col. McCoy describes the total cost of combat and the price paid by all who choose to become a warrior. By pointing to positive training examples and keying on the effects of situational training, battle drills, conducted prior to and during combat, he successfully trained his Marines and developed the proper habits that would be the difference between life and death during combat. He directed his Marines to become "experts in the application of violence" without sacrificing their humanity. The essence of war is violence and the act of killing legitimate human targets without hesitation. To accomplish this, he instituted meaningful training and used his refined principles as a human being to guide him in the leadership and administration on the moral code that rules the field of battle. He was quick to note his own shortcomings and how he overcame them and was the inspiration to the team that triumphed when all Marines survived the day. ***The Passion of Command*** provides inside information into the warrior culture and allows one to grasp the complexities when hardening the mind, body and spirit for the rigors of combat.

15. ***The Defense of Jisr al Doreaa***. By Michael Burgoyne and Albert Marckwardt. Following the invasion of Iraq in 2003 the U.S. military found itself in a battle with a lethal and adaptive insurgency. ***The Defense of Jisr al-Doreaa*** is an instructional parable of counterinsurgency that addresses the myriad of difficulties associated with war in the postmodern era. In this tactical primer based on the military classic ***The Defence of Duffer's Drift***, a young officer deployed for the first time in Iraq receives ground-level lessons about urban combat, communications technology, and high-powered weaponry in an environment where policy meets reality. Over the course of six dreams, the inexperienced leader fights the same battle again and again, learning each time from his failures. Accompanied here by the original novella that inspired it, ***The Defense of Jisr al-Doreaa*** offers an invaluable resource for cadets and junior military leaders seeking to master counterinsurgency warfare—as well as general readers seeking a deeper understanding of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Just as its predecessor has been a hallmark of military instruction, ***The Defense of Jisr al-Doreaa*** will draw the road map for counterinsurgency in the postmodern world.



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