

Thomas E. Ricks

Writer

Thomas Ricks is the military history columnist for *The New York Times Book Review* and a visiting fellow at Bowdoin College's history department.

Ricks covered the U.S. military for the *Washington Post* from 2000 through 2008. Until the end of 1999 he had the same beat at the *Wall Street Journal*, where he was a reporter for 17 years. He reported on U.S. military activities in Somalia, Haiti, Korea, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Kuwait, Turkey, Afghanistan and Iraq. He was part of a *Wall Street Journal* team that won the Pulitzer Prize for national reporting in 2000 for a series of articles on how the U.S. military might change to meet the new demands of the 21st century. The series is posted at:

<https://www.pulitzer.org/winners/staff-47>

Ricks also was part of a *Washington Post* team that won the 2002 Pulitzer prize for reporting about the beginning of the U.S. counteroffensive against terrorism. Those articles are posted at:

<https://www.pulitzer.org/winners/staff-55>

He is the author of seven books. His best known is *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2003-05*, which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 2007. His second book on that war, *The Gamble: General Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-08*, was published in 2009. That was followed by *The Generals: American Military Command from World War II to Today*. Both *Fiasco* and *The Generals* appeared on the U.S. Army Chief of Staff's official reading list. He also wrote *Making the Corps*, which won the *Washington Monthly's* "Political Book of the Year" award. His first novel, *A Soldier's Duty*, about the U.S. military intervening in Afghanistan, was published by Random House in June 2001--some four months before the U.S. actually did intervene there. *Churchill and Orwell: The Fight for Freedom* was his fourth consecutive book to appear on the New York Times bestseller list. His books have been published in Britain, France, Spain, Italy, Turkey, Bulgaria, Estonia, Russia, Brazil, Korea, Taiwan and China.

His seventh book, *First Principles: What America's Founders Learned from the Greeks and Romans, and How That Shaped Our Country*, was published in November 2020, and by the end of the month was on the *New York Times* bestsellers list.

He also has written on defense matters for the *Atlantic Monthly* and other publications. Here are two of his more recent articles:

"In and out of time in Iraq" (a memoir)

<http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/iraq-war-ptsd>

"The Secret Life of a Book Manuscript" (about writing and editing a book)

<https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/08/the-secret-life-of-a-book-manuscript/536982/>

Born in Massachusetts in 1955, he grew up in New York and Afghanistan and graduated from Yale in 1977. He is married to Mary Catherine Ricks, author of *Escape on the Pearl*, a history of one of the

biggest slave escapes in American history. They have two grown children. For recreation he enjoys kayaking, sailing, hiking, biking, and reading military history.

Ricks speech on George Marshall:

<https://youtu.be/IPcEPdfEGto>

Ricks speech on the Korean War

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJhjEoxj1s>

His 27 appearances on C-Span are listed at:

<https://www.c-span.org/person/?thomasricks>

A list of his other television appearances is available at

http://www.imdb.com/name/nm2340172/?ref=tt_cl_t11