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# The Pentagon's Brain: An Uncensored History of DARPA, America's Top-Secret Military Research Agency

By Annie Jacobsen



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**NATIONAL BESTSELLER A Pulitzer Prize Finalist and the definitive history of DARPA, the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency, from the author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Area 51***

No one has ever written the history of the Defense Department's most secret, most powerful, and most controversial military science R&D agency. In the first-ever history about the organization, *New York Times* bestselling author Annie Jacobsen draws on inside sources, exclusive interviews, private documents, and declassified memos to paint a picture of DARPA, or "the Pentagon's brain," from its Cold War inception in 1958 to the present.

This is *the* book on DARPA--a compelling narrative about this clandestine intersection of science and the American military and the often frightening results.



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### Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

**An Amazon Best Book of September 2015:** If you're searching for an obtuse, synapse-dulling book on DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) and its mission to create breakthrough military technologies, look elsewhere. Jacobsen's nimble account of the ultra-secret R&D arm of the Defense Department engagingly details the shrouded history of the organization, starting with its genesis during the nuclear arms race and covering its efforts up through today. In her final section, Jacobsen offers solid but chilling conjectures on what covert programs DARPA is focused on now. Jacobsen (a journalist and the author of *Operation Paperclip* and *Area 51*) strikes a balance between lauding the technology leaps driven by DARPA and pointing out that the ultimate goal is to create wartime tools to guarantee U.S. dominance. DARPA's successes include lighter machine guns (developed for slither-bodied soldiers during the Vietnamese war and now standard U.S. issue), the Internet, GPS, and drones. Says Jacobsen, "DARPA creates, DARPA dominates, and when sent to the battlefield, DARPA destroys." But, Jacobsen also asks, "what if some of these 'dramatic new capabilities' are not such a great idea?"

Hawks will find plenty of meat in here to fuel their arguments for the value of top-secret U.S. military programs. At the same time, doves will be well bolstered to pose uncomfortable questions about the worthiness of such activities in a free country. Thoughtful and nuanced, *The Pentagon's Brain* will ask you to use your brain as well.--*Adrian Liang*

Review

**Pulitzer Prize Finalist in History**

**One of *The Washington Post's* Notable Nonfiction Books of 2015**

**One of *The Boston Globe's* Best Books of 2015**

**One of Amazon's Top 100 Books of 2015**

"A brilliantly researched account of a small but powerful secret government agency whose military research profoundly affects world affairs."? *The Pulitzer Prize Committee*

"Filled with the intrigue and high stakes of a spy novel, Jacobsen's history of DARPA is as much a fascinating testament to human ingenuity as it is a paean to endless industrial warfare and the bureaucracy of the military-industrial complex."? *Kirkus Reviews*

"A fascinating and unsettling portrait of the secretive U.S. government agency....Jacobsen walks a fine line in telling the story of the agency and its innovations without coming across as a cheerleader or a critic, or letting the narrative devolve into a salacious tell-all. Jacobsen's ability to objectively tell the story of DARPA, not to mention its murky past, is truly remarkable, making for a terrifically well-crafted treatise on the agency most Americans know next to nothing about."

? *Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

"Jacobsen offers a definitive history of the clandestine agency.... She explores the implications of DARPA work on technology that will not be widely known to the public for generations but will certainly impact national security and concepts of war."? **Vanessa Bush, Booklist (starred review)**

"Jacobsen's account will serve as the model for histories of military research and development and is likely to lead to more works and articles about DARPA.... Engrossing, conversation-starting read..."? **Library Journal**

"Annie Jacobsen's considerable talents as an investigative journalist prove indispensable in uncovering the remarkable history of one of America's most powerful and clandestine military research agencies. And she is a great storyteller, making the tantalizing tale of *The Pentagon's Brain* -- from the depths of the Cold War to present day -- come alive on every page."? **Gerald Posner, author of God's Bankers**

"A fascinating and sometimes uneasy exploration of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency...." ? **Dina Temple-Raston, The Washington Post**

"In this fascinating and terrifying account, Annie Jacobsen regales us with the stories behind the agency's 'consequential and sometimes Orwellian' innovations, including autonomous weapons systems--killer robots that could decide, without human intervention, who lives and who dies."? **Bryan Schatz, Mother Jones**

"Annie Jacobsen has a gift for unearthing secret, long-buried information."? **Mary Ann Gwinn, Seattle Times**

"An exciting read that asks an important question: what is the risk of allowing lethal technologies to be developed in secret?"? **Ann Finkbeiner, Nature**

"*The Pentagon's Brain* puts Jacobsen in the company of important writers ... such as Shane Harris and Rajiv Chandrasekran."? **Chris Bray, Bookforum**

#### About the Author

Annie Jacobsen is the author of the *New York Times* bestsellers *Area 51* and *Operation Paperclip* and was a contributing editor at the *Los Angeles Times Magazine*. A graduate of Princeton University, she lives in Los Angeles with her husband and two sons.

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#### Karla Whisenant:

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**Craig Palmer:**

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**Kimberly Plummer:**

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