

## The Cambridge Illustrated History of Warfare

### SECOND EDITION

The new edition of *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Warfare*, written and updated by a team of nine distinguished military historians, examines how war was waged by Western powers across a sweeping timeframe, beginning with classical Greece and Rome, moving through the Middle Ages and the early modern period, down to the wars of the twenty-first century in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. The book stresses five essential aspects of the Western way of war: a combination of technology, discipline, and an aggressive military tradition with an extraordinary capacity to respond rapidly to challenges and to use capital rather than manpower to win. Although the focus remains on the West, and on the role of violence in its rise, each chapter also examines the military effectiveness of its adversaries and the regions in which the West's military edge has been – and continues to be – challenged.

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EDITED BY  
**Geoffrey Parker**  
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# Preface

The origins of this book lie in the vision, advice, and acumen of Peter Richards, who died of cancer in 2009, aged fifty-eight. Peter invited me to edit a volume on warfare in a series of Illustrated Histories that he was developing for Cambridge University Press, and in 1993 he attended (and funded) a meeting of the contributors at which we thrashed out the overall framework of the volume and the common denominators for our chapters. Subsequently, Stuart McCready put together the images and designed the spreads. The result was *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Warfare: The Triumph of the West*, first published in 1995. A decade later, Eric Crahan of Cambridge University Press proposed and oversaw a new edition that extended the original text, which ended with the Gulf War of 1991. It appeared in 2009. Karen Anderson, Rachel Blaifeder, Cecelia Cancellaro, Nicola Chapman, and Deborah Gershenowitz have co-ordinated production of the present volume, which updates the previous version and takes the story down to March 2019. The contributors and I are very grateful to all of them for their enthusiasm, expertise, and hard work.

The approach adopted in this volume lays its authors open to the charge of *Eurocentrism*. We offer three defences. First, it would be impossible to provide adequate coverage in a single volume of the military history of all major cultures (some of them, like the Chinese way of war, stretching back even further than that of Europe). Second, merely to pay lip service to the military and naval traditions of Africa, Asia, and the Americas, while devoting the lion's share of the attention to the West, would be unpardonable distortion. Finally, as explained in the Introduction, for good or ill, the Western way of war has become dominant all over the world. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, remarkably few states and cultures managed to resist Western arms for long – and the few that did so usually succeeded through imitation or adaptation. The rise and development of this dominant tradition, together with the secrets of its success, therefore seem worthy of examination and analysis.

All dates after 1582 are given according to the Gregorian calendar, even for European countries such as Britain

and Russia that only abandoned the Julian calendar later. Dates from the Chinese, Islamic, Japanese, and Jewish systems of reckoning time have also been converted to the Gregorian calendar. Where recognized English versions of foreign place names exist, they have been used (thus Brussels, Moscow, and Vienna); otherwise today's style has been preferred (thus Bratislava rather than Pressburg or Pozsony; Lviv and not Lwów or Lemberg). Likewise, with personal names, where an established English usage exists, it has been adopted (Gustavus Adolphus, Philip IV). In other cases, the style and title employed by the person concerned are preferred. Pinyin romanization has been used for Chinese, except when quoting from a work that used Wade-Giles; and the family name has been given first for Chinese and Japanese persons, past and present.

The editor has accumulated many debts of gratitude. Since all the contributors to this volume wrote their original drafts at the same time, they subsequently undertook a substantial amount of revising and rewriting to ensure that each chapter complemented, but did not duplicate, the others. First and foremost, therefore, I wish to thank my co-authors, who graciously accepted more editorial interference than any scholar should have to suffer, and also provided me with invaluable help and encouragement. I also thank Jon Sumida for some excellent advice at an early stage, and Leif Torkelsen for vital assistance in preparing this edition for the press.

The contributors and I also thank those who have offered suggestions and references along the way – especially Michael Howard and Donald Kagan, who read the first draft of the work and provided important suggestions for improvement. The intellectual debts of individual contributors appear on pp. 499–501.

The authors dedicate this volume with affection and admiration to the memory of Michael Howard and William H. McNeill – soldiers, scholars, and mentors – who set the standard to which we aspire.

GEOFFREY PARKER  
*Armistice Day 2020*

