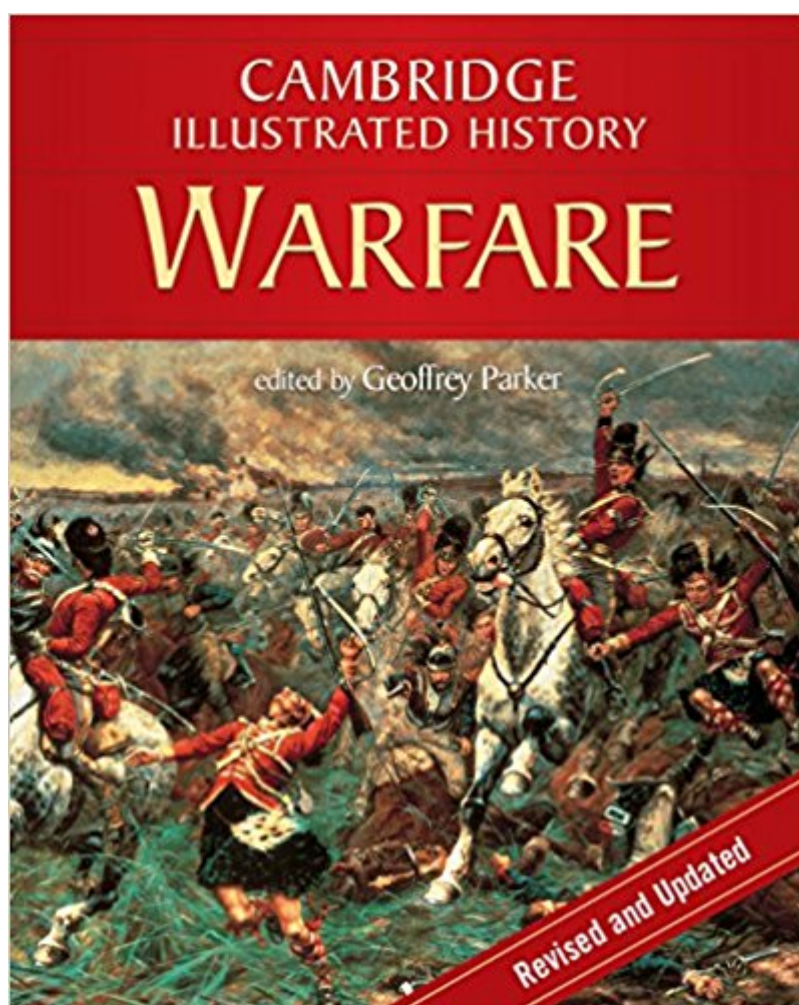


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# The Cambridge Illustrated History Of Warfare: The Triumph Of The West (Cambridge Illustrated Histories)



## Synopsis

Now available in a revised and updated version, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Warfare* provides a unique account of Western warfare from antiquity to the present day. The book treats the history of all aspects of the subject: the development of warfare on land, sea and air; weapons and technology; strategy and defense; discipline and intelligence; mercenaries and standing armies; cavalry and infantry; chivalry and Blitzkrieg; guerilla assault and nuclear arsenals. It places in context particular key events in the history of armed engagement, from the Greek victory at Marathon, through the introduction of gunpowder in medieval England and France, to the jungle warfare of Vietnam and the strategic air attacks of the Gulf War. Throughout, there is an emphasis on the socio-economic aspects of military progress: who pays for it, how can its returns be measured, and to what extent does it explain the rise of the West to global dominance over two millennia?

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Highly polished and well illustrated, this book is a comprehensive history of the Western (European) way of war, spanning ancient Greece to today's modern methods and policies of destruction. Parker and six prominent American and British scholars contribute 17 chapters to this detailed study of war. Parker's effort explores the history of Western war through strategy and policy; tactics and logistics; finances and culture; weapons and fortifications; air, land and naval battle; and conventional and civil war. The text is superbly supported by numerous and handy sidebars providing details,

insights, and anecdotes. Supplementing the text are a reference guide containing a rather subjective chronology of warfare, a pedestrian and slightly inaccurate glossary, and a marvelously described annotated bibliography. Parker's conclusion is historically based and particularly chilling. For the general reader. Col. William D. Bushnell, USMC (Ret.), Brunswick, Me. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

'Highly polished and well illustrated, this book is a comprehensive history of the Western (European) way of war, spanning ancient Greece to today's modern methods and policies of destruction ... The text is superbly supported by numerous and handy sidebars providing details, insights, and anecdotes ... Parker's conclusion is historically based and particularly chilling.' Library Journal'... this is a well-written and handsomely presented volume ... the illustrations are pertinent, and the captions interesting ... the range of scholarship is impressive ... and it has all been pulled together by the finest military historian currently writing, who has also contributed several important sections.' History in Focus'... exceptional ... beautifully illustrated ... A highly readable book, and an interesting one, both for the expert and the amateur enthusiast. A must for college libraries.' USI Journal' This book deserves close attention from the student of military affairs...a valuable overview of the history of warfare ...' Foreign Affairs' This is an attractive book. The numerous illustrations are marvellous and are integrated well with the text.' Journal of World History'... impressive ...' Contemporary Review

This book offers an excellent overview of warfare throughout the ages, from the Assyrians to the present day, and covering the personalities, weapons, strategies, tactics and technologies used. It should be noted that it covers only warfare as it has impacted and been fought in the Western culture, with no reference at all to important forces like the Mongols and only very brief interludes relating to the likes of China and Japan (except insofar as their wars involved Western opponents as in the Russo-Japanese War or World War II). It is not a work for experts, in my opinion, but a terrific primer for those who are new to the subject and looking to ground themselves in the subject before moving on to more focussed and analytical works. One very helpful feature of the book is that it contains diagrams of several key battles, showing troop deployments and movements. Many other overview texts on the history of warfare which I have seen merely describe the battles, and I found the diagrams particularly useful in clarifying how these fights developed. My one criticism of the book is that it might have used more such diagrams, but that is a quibble.

Outstanding history book that logically explains the Western Way of Warfare and how it came to dominate the globe. Its definitely worth the few extra \$\$ to get the illustrations, as they both further explain concepts, and are interesting/entertaining.

First a pet peeve - why is it necessary to make a book glossy from cover to cover forcing the reader to heft over 3 pounds every time he or she reads it? I have never had my arm muscles ache as much as with this 400 page book! Ok, on to content. This book is a comprehensive look at the way men have gone to battle since the rise of the West in ancient Greece. Using detailed diagrams when necessary, the reader can see how manpower was deployed and how weapons were used. Particularly interesting to me were the diagrams of the Greek phalanx and the Roman centuries, examples of the discipline and technique that along with technology helped the West to defeat opponents. Did you know that a major factor in the success of Alexander the Great was the ability of his troops to carry all they needed thus avoiding a long supply line and crowd of camp followers? This book is filled with insightful commentary on why armed conflicts turned out the way they did. Why was the huge Spanish Armada defeated by the relatively insignificant (at the time) English Navy? What was the Needlegun and why did it give the Prussians an advantage? How did Cortez with just a few hundred Spaniards defeat tens of thousands of Aztecs? The tide of battle can be turned by weather, by leadership or the lack thereof, by technology and other factors. You will find yourself on an informative march through over 2000 years of conflict up to the 1991 war in Iraq. On finishing this book, I wondered how the Bush directed "war of choice" in 2003 would be seen by such a history as this. As one would expect, more recent wars are treated in more detail with excellent accounts of WW1 and WW2. Happily, the book doesn't get bogged down in detailed maps of tactical movements of armies on the field unless it aids in making the reader aware of some new battlefield technique. Likewise, there are no long discussions of particular weapons. The goal is always to ask - how did things change and why? Provided you work out at the gym to build up your biceps for this brick of a book, I think you will be rewarded by the fact packed, concise writing supported with excellent illustrations. In war, victory or defeat can happen as a result of unpredictable factors but, over time, superior practices and technologies have a telling effect. The persistent rise of the West was no accident. Read this book to find out how it happened.

Focuses less on the who, what, where and when and more on the how and why in regard to the nature and evolution of western conflicts and warfare. It is more of a narrative of the contributing factors, prevailing societal political, socioeconomic and cultural realities surrounding western

warfare and how these influenced conflicts and the ramifications these had on Western warfare. What distinguished this volume from others I have read on military history is that the focus is not necessarily on the conflicts and military engagements themselves but more on contributing factors (advances in science and technology, societal factors such as structure, religion, culture, politics, and population, changing role of economy in warfare, how notable military leaders influenced warfare) that influenced the evolution and development of warfare in the West. "Warfare" describes how evolution of warfare was autocatalytic much in the same way that societal development was shown to be in "Guns, Germs and Steel" and how state-making and war-making stimulated each other.

As a military historian with particular interests this book helps put it in the overall context of military history from ancient times. Some of the later chapters tend towards a less academic approach. I expected more from Cambridge. However, overall it is a useful book.

Excellent item.

Anyone interested in Military history, or history in general, this is a great read.

Great history book! Covers almost everything needed to learn about the history of War.

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