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THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF WARFARE

Western nations – led by the United States – currently hold a strong advantage in almost all military confrontations. How did the ‘Western way of war’ become so dominant? This book, written by a team of seven distinguished military historians, provides an answer that runs from the origins in Classical Greece and Rome, through the Middle Ages (when enemies of the West almost triumphed) and the early modern period (when the West used military force to carve out extensive new territories, first in the Americas and Siberia and then around the coasts of Asia and Africa), down to the World Wars and the Gulf Wars.

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 throughout this book 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 areas in which the West’s military edge has been – and continues to be – challenged.

Geoffrey Parker is Andreas Dorpalen Professor of History at the Ohio State University. He is the author or editor of more than thirty books, including *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road, 1567–1659* (second edition, Cambridge, 2004), and *The Military Revolution. Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800* (second edition, Cambridge, 2001).

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Preface

As with its precursor, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Warfare: The Triumph of the West* (1995), the approach adopted in this volume lays its authors open to the charge of Eurocentrism; but 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, over the past two centuries 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 by imitation or adaptation. The rise and development of this dominant tradition, together with the secret of its success, therefore seems worthy of examination and analysis.

The editor has accumulated many debts of gratitude. Since all the contributors to this volume wrote their drafts at the same time, a substantial amount of revising and rewriting was required 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 assistance and encouragement. Next, I am delighted to acknowledge the sensitive and enlightened support of our commissioning editor

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Preface

at Cambridge University Press, Dr Peter Richards, who first proposed the idea of this book to me and without whose advice and acumen it would never have been completed. Finally, we are all grateful to those who have offered suggestions and references: to Jon Sumida, who offered me some excellent advice at an early stage; to Michael Howard and Donald Kagan, who read the entire work in first draft; and to the many other colleagues whose assistance to individual contributors is acknowledged on pages 477–80.

In preparing this revised edition, the contributors and I have corrected a few minor errors that crept into the original text. We thank Peter Pierson and Jon Sumida for drawing them to our attention. We have also updated the bibliographies to each chapter and extended coverage of events to 2004. Finally, as with *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Warfare*, the authors respectfully dedicate this volume to Michael Howard and William H. McNeill, who set the standard to which we aspire.

Geoffrey Parker