



A History of Warfare

By John Keegan

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The acclaimed author and preeminent military historian John Keegan examines centuries of human conflict. From primitive man in the bronze age to the end of the cold war in the twentieth century, Keegan shows how armed conflict has been a primary preoccupation throughout the history of civilization and how deeply rooted its practice has become in our cultures.

"Keegan is at once the most readable and the most original of living military historians . . . *A History of Warfare* is perhaps the most remarkable study of warfare that has yet been written."--The New York Times Book Review.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In his sweeping new study, Keegan (*The Face of Battle*) examines the origins and nature of warfare, the ethos of the primitive and modern warrior and the development of weapons and defenses from the battle of Megiddo (1469 B.C.) into the nuclear age. Keegan offers a refreshingly original and challenging perspective. He characterizes warriors as the protectors of civilization rather than as its enemy and maintains that warfare is "entirely a masculine activity." Though warfare has become an ingrained practice over the course of 4000 years, he argues, its manifestation in the primitive world was circumscribed by ritual and ceremony that often embodied restraint, diplomacy and negotiation. Peacekeepers, he suggests, would benefit from studying primitive warmaking--especially now, "a time when the war of all against all already confronts us." A masterwork. Photos. 40,000 first printing; History Book Club main selection; BOMC alternate. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From School Library Journal

YA-Keegan begins his comprehensive but concise survey by debunking the classical tenet that war is an inevitable result of politics. In a well-developed and relatively easy-to-follow argument, he reexamines this previously inviolate theory. By following the progress of war and warriors from primitive societies to the post-Cold War era, and by detailing the concurrent development of weapons technology, he allows readers to see that warfare need not be an all-or-nothing event. He includes many interesting details in his survey, e.g., vivid descriptions of torture, of the development of horse-warriors and charioteers, and of the arrival and consequences of the atom bomb. While leading readers to the conclusion and hope that man is not necessarily a warrior, he canvasses the spread of "civilization" and the making of nation-states as we know them today. The book includes prints, diagrams, and photographs. This title will challenge interested readers and prove useful for research papers, philosophical discussions, debates, and anthropology and sociology classes. Even dedicated militarists will find food for thought in Keegan's theories and historical perspective. *Susan H. Woodcock, King's Park Library, Burke, VA*
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From Library Journal

Keegan adds to his reputation as a writer of military history (*The Second World War* , LJ 11/1/89, among others) with this wide-ranging and provocative volume. While he believes that humankind is not doomed to make war, he recognizes that the world's written history is largely a history of warfare. Warfare in turn reflects culture. For instance, Asian war making is characterized by patterns of delay, evasion, and indirection and an ethic of limitation based on Confucian and Islamic ideals. Western culture, on the other hand, incorporates a moral element of face-to-face battle to the death and a technological bias toward constant innovations in weaponry. These factors have combined to generate the total wars that are often considered the norm of conflict. Keegan's emphases on restraint and ritual in war, and on the importance of separating it from politics, challenge conventional wisdom in a way that makes this work essential for all public and private collections on the subject.

- *D.E. Showalter, Colorado Coll., Colorado Springs*

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Users Review

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