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The Cambridge Illustrated History of Warfare: The Triumph of the West

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the relevant installations had they taken place.

Given his professional status with the British Army Legal Services, it is perhaps not surprising that Rogers has not dealt with the law as it affects maritime conflict; however, the basic principles he outlines and discusses are significant for all theatres.

Law on the Battlefield may prove most useful for the army legal adviser, but those in the legal services of both the air force and the navy will find sufficient material to help them in their duties as advisers. They will often be able, without undue effort, to adapt them to their own specific problems.

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Parker, Geoffrey, ed. *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Warfare: The Triumph of the West*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995. 610pp. \$39.95

By any measure of achievement, attempting to write a single-volume history of warfare is a massive undertaking. In the latest of the Cambridge Illustrated Histories series, Geoffrey Parker has assembled an eminent group of historians (Christopher Allmand, Victor David Hanson, John A. Lynn, Williamson Murray, Geoffrey Parker, and Patricia Seed), who admirably meet the challenge. Subtitled "The Triumph of the West," Parker's latest opus argues convincingly that over the past two centuries the Western way of war has become

dominant all over the globe. Consequently the rise and development of this tradition, together with the secret of its success, seems "worthy of examination and analysis."

According to Parker, the Western way of war rests upon five principles: technology, discipline, a highly aggressive military tradition, a remarkable capacity to innovate and also respond rapidly to the innovation of others, and (since approximately A.D. 1500) institutions to finance the escalating costs of war. The combination of these five factors provided a formula for military success that, with few interruptions, ensured the West's survival in times of adversity and its eventual expansion to a position of global hegemony.

Graduates of the Naval War College will find Parker's analysis of maritime strategy fascinating. What made Horatio Nelson the greatest sailor of his age, for example, was his transformation of the character of naval combat. Forsaking the line-ahead, which had dominated naval combat for centuries, Nelson relied on melee tactics that, by breaking up the enemy's formation, turned a fleet action into a series of ship-to-ship battles. Such melees would not have been feasible without the superior quality of Nelson's captains and their ships; this style of warfare reached its culmination at Trafalgar.

Great Britain's mastery of the seas remained unchallenged until Alfred von Tirpitz's construction of the German High Seas Fleet in the decades before World War I. However, Tirpitz's greatest mistake, states Murray, lay in his failure to recognize that geography had given Britain an almost unassailable

naval position. The British Isles lay astride Germany's path to the Atlantic, while they shielded Britain's own trade routes.

Nor did Tirpitz ever devise a plan for how he would use the navy if the British did not launch a close blockade of Germany's ports. Unexpectedly, in World War I the Royal Navy maintained instead a distant blockade of the German coastline. The Battle of Jutland in 1916, like Trafalgar a century earlier, merely confirmed Britain's status as ruler of the seas, a status it had yielded only reluctantly to the United States by the time of the armistice.

The authors also stress the significance of maritime operations in World War II. Murray states that the battle of the North Atlantic constituted the most important strategic achievement of the Western allies during the war. The successful defense of the sea lines of communication on which Britain and the United States depended for power projection and economic production was the *sine qua non* of the survival of Great Britain and the subsequent invasion of Europe. Despite numerous losses among commercial convoys, the Allies turned the tide in April 1943, sinking forty-one U-boats and causing Admiral Karl Dönitz to pull his boats from the central Atlantic.

Murray makes an equally insightful analysis of the American Civil War. He opines that it was the most important conflict of the nineteenth century, because for the first time opposing governments harnessed the popular enthusiasm (rising from the French Revolution to the industrial technology) that was sweeping the West. Other

governments refined these principles in the latter half of the century, notably Prussia in its wars of German unification.

In summary, Parker concludes that war has served as the driving force behind the West's rise to global domination. Once the West harnessed its industrial power to its military endeavors in the eighteenth century, the investment in technology, discipline, and staying-power virtually assured world domination. Not surprisingly, World War II caused the economy of the United States to undergo the largest, fastest, and most sustained expansion ever recorded. As for the future, Parker argues that Western dominance will continue as long as the West demonstrates a sustained ability to manage international crises and prevent them from evolving into armed conflicts, and a continued willingness to pay for defense even against dangers that are not yet immediately apparent.

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Staar, Richard F. *The New Military in Russia: Ten Myths That Shape the Image*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1996. 248pp. \$41.95
Richard Staar, currently a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, is a former ambassador to the Mutual Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) negotiations and a longtime analyst of the Soviet and Russian militaries. This book reflects his thorough understanding of key issues in the Russian military and is an excellent source for those seeking to gain insight