

The Cambridge History of Warfare, 2nd ed.

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successes that the author tells us the story of Charlie; instead, McRaven is impressed by the man's humility and its effect on those around him. He concludes the chapter with the observation: "The power of humility is that it brings us closer together and the role of every hero is to unite people, not divide them" (p. 25).

While I enjoyed and appreciated each of the stories of heroic character told in a lighthearted and conversational manner, the great strength of the book is in the author's encouragement to activate the heroic character that is within reach for every person. He encourages the reader to do one thing in the right direction today, and he believes that the confidence to take the next step will follow. Regardless of whether you feel yourself to be courageous, he says, "Take just one step forward. *Just one*" (p. 13). If our goal is to instill hope in others, he says, "Find out what you're good at and give it to others" (p. 115). If we want to lighten the burden on others around us, he writes, "Find your comedic voice and use your wit to save those around you, to free them from their sorrow, to give them joy, and to help them see the humor in the darkest of times" (p. 132). McRaven contends that self-reflection followed by small, incremental steps is the key to the heroic life.

This is an ideal book for leaders of all ranks. Senior leaders will appreciate the wisdom and insight the author has accrued throughout his career, but they also will be inspired to be on the lookout for heroic virtues in their subordinates. Small-unit leaders will find these stories memorable and easy to share with those they supervise. The hopeful tone of the book will encourage leaders who may spend an inordinate amount of time dealing with character defects in others to focus on helping them develop heroic

character. Finally, all will be challenged to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses and seek out others whose lives are marked by the hero code.

SCOTT CAUBLE



The Cambridge History of Warfare, ed. Geoffrey Parker. 2nd ed. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2020. 608 pages. \$99.99.

Shortly before the outbreak of World War I, the Prusso-German general Friedrich von Bernhardi (1849–1930) published his best-selling *Deutschland und der nächste Krieg* (1911). Bernhardi, the long-serving military historian of the German General Staff, understood war to be something far more elemental than Clausewitz's famous "continuation of politics by other means." Drawing on fin de siècle social Darwinist and ethno-nationalist thought, Bernhardi argued that war facilitated human development. War provided an opportunity to rejuvenate the nation, the society, and the race. This was an ancient notion, as Bernhardi acknowledged by drawing on the writings of Heraclitus of Ephesus: "[W]ar is the father of all things. The sages of antiquity long before Darwin recognized this" (Bernhardi, *Deutschland und der nächste Krieg*, pp. 11–12). In Bernhardi's view, the development of a society occurred within the forge of war—it created the necessity to evolve or go extinct. The manner in which a society prosecutes war is, likewise, a representation of that society. War, like politics, is both a reflection of and a response to the form and function of its governing society.

It is this dynamic that the contributors to the second edition of *The Cambridge*

History of Warfare explore fully in their development of the concept of the “Western way of war” (p. vii). The nine contributors (among them Williamson A. Murray and Peter Monsoor) of the book’s eighteen chapters clearly demonstrate that the Western way of war consists of five principal elements that reflect broader Western society: discipline, finance, technology, eclecticism, and an aggressive military tradition. The most important of these are discipline and finance—elements that allowed for the nearly perpetual prosecution of war through the massed mobilization of society. It is this “natural state” of Western civilization, from the Early Bronze Age onward, that facilitated the primacy of the Western way of war today (p. vii). This perpetual struggle militarized the Western state, while simultaneously the Western state bureaucratized and centralized Western warfare.

Gradually, as ancient Western society shifted toward oligarchic political structures and the centralized socioeconomic power relations of the latifundia, so too did the “limited wars” of the hoplite yeomanry of the Greek polis give way to the “wars of annihilation” of Rome’s imperial legions—what Victor Davis Hanson describes as the “the perfect culmination of existing Western military prowess” (pp. 5, 46). Yet this development simultaneously laid the seeds of feudal decentralization, as the ability to mobilize society for war increasingly detached from the central state and coalesced around ambitious individuals on the periphery.

From late antiquity to the early modern period, the ability of the central state to marshal its domain for war relied on negotiating power relationships with regional political elites—feudal

lords, wealthy merchant cities, or mercenary bands. This led to a “startling continuity” of military organization, strategy, and tactics in the West until the advent of gunpowder (p. 63). The decentralized nature of the state further made the pursuance of “total victory” impossible, so warfare likewise returned to its “positional” version, like that prosecuted during the Bronze Age: harvest-dependent campaigns of sieges and countersieges against fortified population centers. Even when the central state gained an overwhelming share of internal political and economic power under Europe’s divine-right monarchies epitomized by Louis XIV (1638–1715), the nature of positional warfare changed little. Limited, positional war—albeit dynastic and enhanced with gunpowder—continued to dictate the military organization, strategy, and tactics of the early modern period.

This dynamic shifted dramatically with the revolutionary ethno-nationalism of post-Revolution France. Under Napoléon, the nation became the army and the army the nation. The superiority of the “nation in arms,” of the massed mobilization of an entire society against the old dynastic form, was confirmed (p. 147). The Western state and its corresponding way of war now broke out from its late antiquity bounds, creating a perfect storm of technological innovation, ethno-nationalist discipline, and national mobilization of resources. Correspondingly, between 1815 and 1914 the Western way of war subjugated the near entirety of the globe to Western political hegemony. Despite subsequent evolutions from positional to maneuver to nuclear warfare over the twentieth century, the primacy of the Western way of war—uniting discipline, finance, technology, eclecticism, and an aggressive

military tradition—continued. Even as the West's global political and economic hegemony erodes, the Western way of war will continue to inform the military organization, strategy, and tactics of any would-be hegemon.

Ultimately, *The Cambridge History of Warfare* is the most comprehensive textbook treatment of Western military history extant, and it serves as the quintessential companion to the Cambridge History of War series. While it may be “open to the charge of Eurocentrism,” there is no doubt that the “Western way of war has become dominant all over the world” (p. vii). The volume includes twenty maps, a helpful glossary, a detailed chronology, and an extensive bibliography. No work on this subject can be truly comprehensive, but readers will find this edition to be a good resource providing an overview of the Western way of war.

VIKTOR M. STOLL



Information Hunters: When Librarians, Soldiers, and Spies Banded Together in World War II Europe, by Kathy Peiss. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2020. 296 pages. \$36.95.

The ultrasuccessful businessman Mark Cuban stated in an interview that “[i]nformation is power. Particularly when the competition ignores the opportunity to do the same” (“Interview with Scott McKenzie,” *slushpile.net*, 9 March 2006). This axiom is especially true during times of war, when information—no matter the subject matter or level of importance—can be made part of the intelligence-gathering process. On today's battlefield, information warfare is one of the many domains in which our military

prepares to fight, and intelligence agencies use much open-source intelligence.

Kathy Peiss, in her book *Information Hunters: When Librarians, Soldiers, and Spies Banded Together in World War II Europe*, examines the efforts of U.S. librarians and archivists during World War II. First they gathered open-source intelligence, then gathered and preserved books, manuscripts, and other sources during the war and postwar periods to enhance the holdings of the Library of Congress and other research collections across the nation.

This is not the typical subject matter for Peiss, who usually studies the history of gender and sexuality. The book started when she began exploring the life of her uncle Reuben Peiss, who was part of the Library of Congress European Mission (LCM), which started with the mission of acquiring books and periodicals for the library but shifted to one of intelligence gathering. Peiss's curiosity regarding her family has resulted in an exciting exploration of a mission that was important during World War II but still holds meaning today.

Peiss divides the book chronologically, with chapters that correspond to different periods and relate the missions of the various units and their masters who collected the information. Peiss illustrates that, unlike the “Monuments Men” who worked within the U.S. Army to protect art and historic buildings, many groups contributed to the protection and gathering of books and other materials. These ranged from the Library of Congress, the Interdepartmental Committee for the Acquisition of Foreign Publications within the Office of Strategic Services (the forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency), and military units such as T-forces, to the Monuments Men