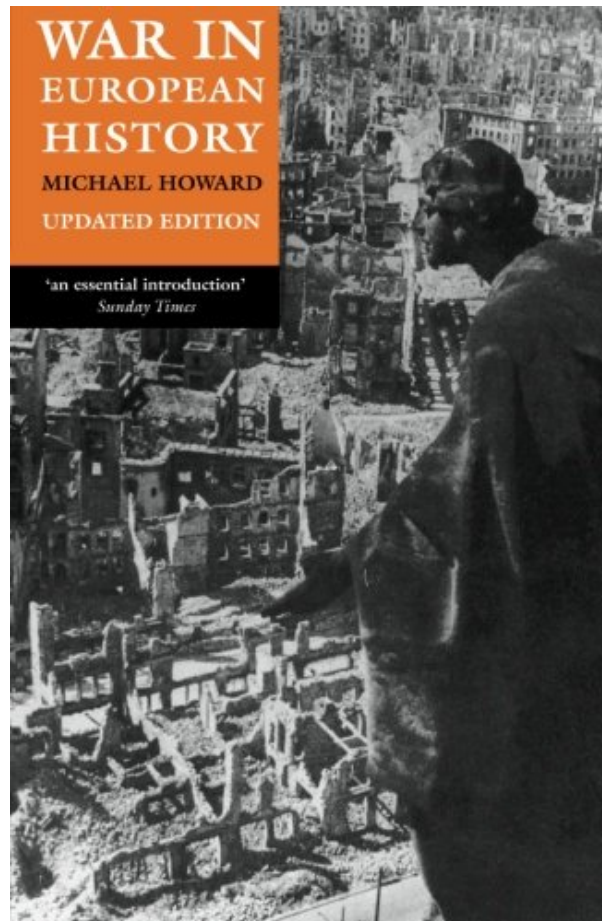
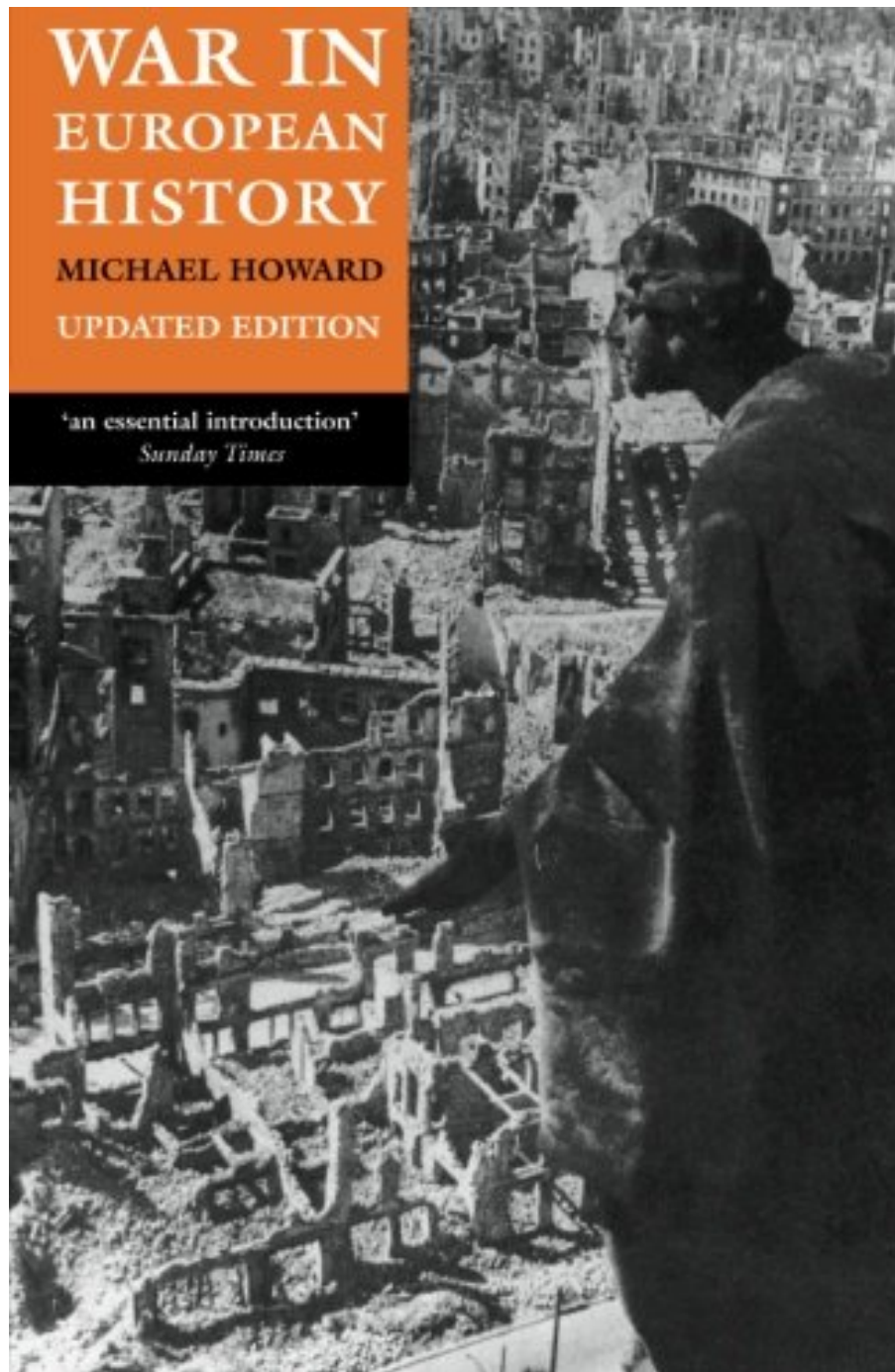


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Review

I cannot think of a better book to put in the hands of someone setting out on the study of military history. Military Times Howard's chief strength...[is] that he widens the study of warfare to take in economic, political and social factors. Military Times

About the Author

Sir Michael Howard is Emeritus Professor of Modern History at the University of Oxford. He has held the Chair of War Studies at King's College, London, the Chichele Chair of War and the Regius Chair of Modern History at Oxford, and the Robert A. Lovatt Chair of Military and Naval History at Yale.

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First published over thirty years ago, War in European History is a brilliantly written survey of the changing ways that war has been waged in Europe, from the Norse invasions to the present day. Far more than a simple military history, the book serves as a succinct and enlightening overview of the development of European society as a whole over the last millennium. From the Norsemen and the world of the medieval knights, through to the industrialized mass warfare of the twentieth century, Michael Howard illuminates the way in which warfare has shaped the history of the Continent, its effect on social and political institutions, and the ways in which technological and social change have in turn shaped the way in which wars are fought. This new edition includes a fully updated further reading and a new final chapter bringing the story into the twenty-first century, including the invasion of Iraq and the so-called "War against Terror."

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Most helpful customer reviews

18 of 19 people found the following review helpful.

Comprehensive, Unique, and Dry

By A Customer

This is the first first book I have come across that really delves into the political and economic aspects of

military history while not losing a beat in discussing the tactics. Howard does a great job of leading one subject into another, but if you do not have some background in European History, this is not the book to start with. Howard's thematic tool is combatants, such as "War of the Knights," "War of the Mercenaries," etc. While this is effective in conveying how one group becomes more important than the previous, he does not really give you a full flavor for why it is changing, concentrating more on weaponry and politics. Overall: read it if you haven't, but make sure you have some background in European history first.

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

Essential Reading

By Hoke

A friend of mine recommended this book to me. At the time it was required reading at West Point and it very well may still be. No other book displays the history of war in Europe in such a concise and complete way. It also shows how the nations of Europe developed and what gave them their defining characteristics. Anyone with an interest in Western history or military history should own a copy of this book.

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

An Introduction to the Wars of Europe...

By HMS Warspite

In "War in European History", distinguished British military historian Michael Howard provides a concise and fascinating survey of European conflict from roughly the Fall of Rome to the end of the Second World War. This book was first published in 1976 and has been provided with a new afterword for the 2009 edition.

In brisk, well-written chapters, Howard explores the contributions to European warfare of the Knights, the Mercenaries, the Merchants, the Professionals, the Revolution, the Nations, and the Technologists. Along the way, he examines the ways in which political movements, growing economic wealth, more effective governments, and more lethal technology interacted to change the nature of European wars.

In a sense, Howard's book has two endings. In the first, the devastation of the world wars and the rise of the Soviet Union and United States by 1945 seemingly ended the role of Europe as the military and political center of the global system. After 1945, the lethality of nuclear weapons seemed to make another major European war all but unthinkable. However, in his updated epilogue, Howard acknowledges that conflict within the global system, of which Europe is a part, will almost inevitably require European participation in future wars.

At a brief 144 pages, "War in European History" can be no more than a survey, even if brilliantly written. Details have inevitably been slighted in favor of larger trends. Howard is admittedly a specialist in European military history; others may reasonably disagree with, for example, his estimate of the adaptability of the American military. However, as an introduction to a major theme of military history, "War in European History" is hard to beat and very highly recommended.

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