

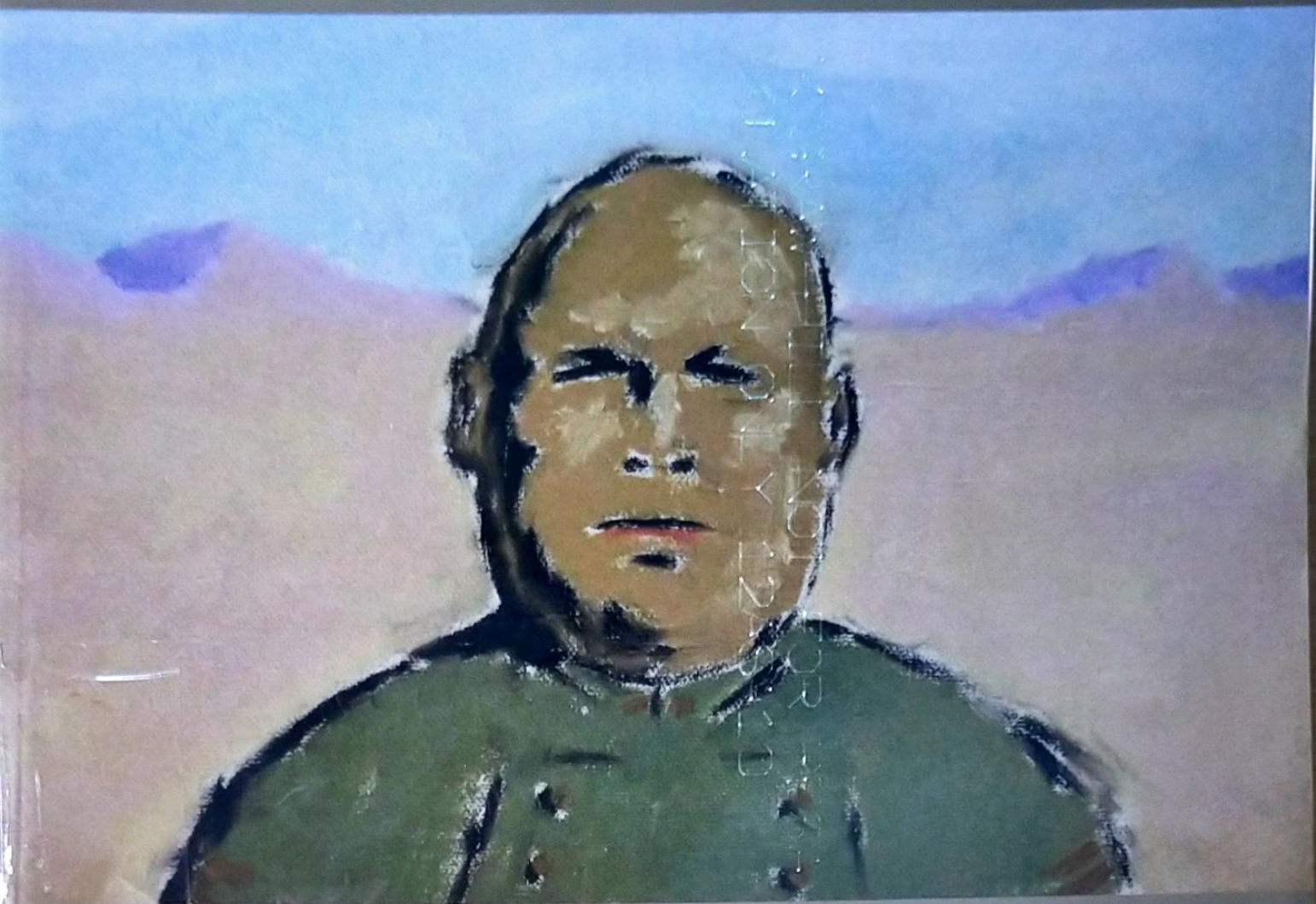
War in World History

Society, Technology, and War from Ancient Times to the Present

STEPHEN MORILLO

JEREMY BLACK

PAUL LOCOCO



VOLUME 2 SINCE 1500

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Stephen Morillo

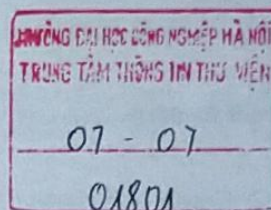
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Preface

This book is a history of the world as viewed through the lens of war. It is designed for use at the college level as a textbook for military history courses or as a textbook or supplemental reading for world history courses. As a general introduction to and synthesis of this topic, we believe it will also interest general readers, especially those interested in military history. But while military history is undoubtedly a popular topic, popularity alone cannot justify a new textbook in intellectual terms. What can a world history textbook focused on warfare offer to students and teachers, in college or outside the curriculum?

WHY WAR?

Warfare has been one of humankind's most prevalent activities throughout history. Military preparations and organization have been central to the internal structures of many human communities. War itself is one of the major ways in which those human communities have interacted with each other, and it has often been intimately connected to other significant forms of contact and influence, whether as a vector for spreading disease, an accompaniment to or form of trade and economic exchange, or a partner of religious expansion.

Because making war has been such a central activity of so many human communities, it makes a good lens through which to view the rest of history, providing a thematic connection among many facets of human experience, as well as being a topic important in its own right. The stresses of war sometimes cast a particularly revealing light on social structures, exposing the strengths and weaknesses of institutions and testing the cultural cohesion of communities in ways that few other activities do.

Despite this, warfare has been largely unexplored up to now as a theme in world history. True world

history textbooks are far more common now than they were even ten years ago. Many of the most recent, in attempting to organize the mountain of material world historians face, have begun structuring their narratives around themes such as technology or cultural contact. Some have even taken an almost entirely thematic approach, exploring various cross-cultural topics, such as the family, religion and the state, or frontiers, from a global perspective. War almost never shows up in these lists of themes except perhaps as an aspect of the conflicts of the twentieth century.

This neglect of military history is doubly odd given that the last twenty-five years has seen an explosion of specialist studies in the field, works that have fundamentally redefined military history as an arena of academic investigation. The nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century traditions of military historiography, dominated by ex-military men writing about decisive battles and the "Art of War" for other ex-military men and amateur war buffs, nearly killed the field for serious historians. But since the mid-1970s, the "new military history" has revitalized military studies. European medieval historians, examining a society organized for war, played a leading role in creating the new military history; more recently, fierce and productive controversies over the early modern period's Military Revolution and the modern age's "revolution in military affairs" have extended the new approaches to histories of war to many times and places.

Central to the new military history has been the process of placing warfare in context or, more accurately, in its many contexts—socioeconomic, institutional, and cultural. One of the aims of this book, therefore, is to synthesize and integrate the new military history from a global perspective. As a military history text, then, we attempt always to examine war and warriors as parts of functioning societies. The