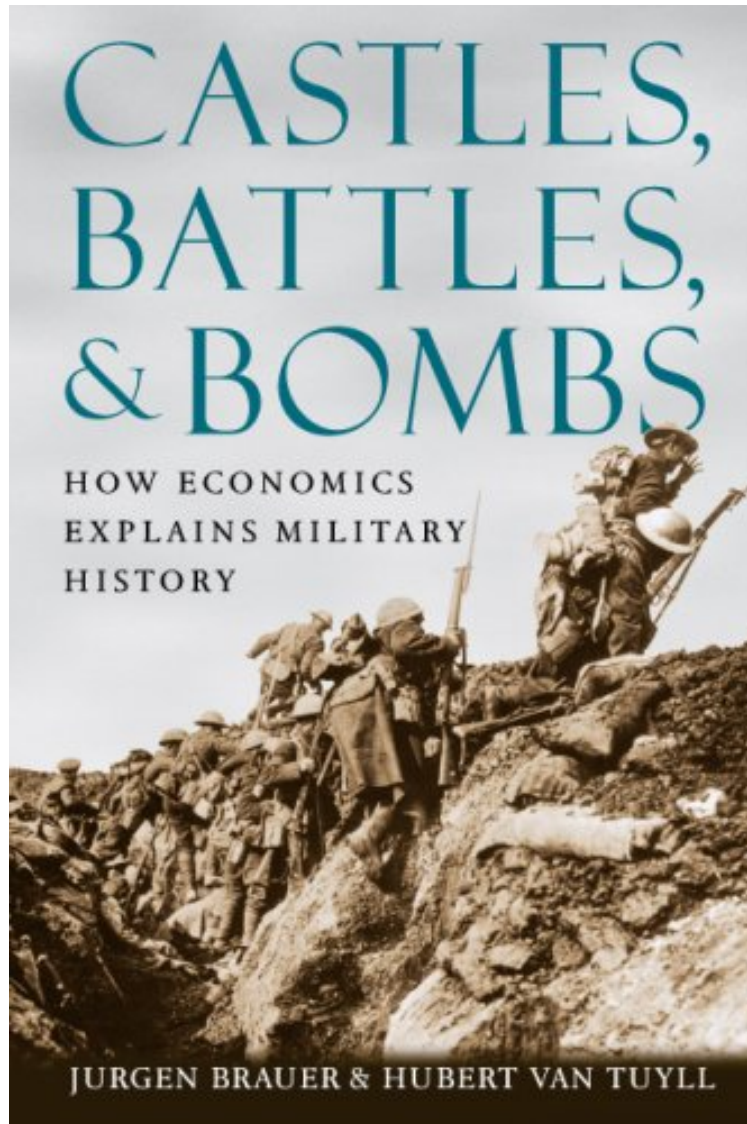


[Ebook free] Castles, Battles, and Bombs: How Economics Explains Military History

# Castles, Battles, and Bombs: How Economics Explains Military History

*Jurgen Brauer, Hubert van Tuyll*  
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**Jurgen Brauer, Hubert van Tuyll : Castles, Battles, and Bombs: How Economics Explains Military History** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Castles, Battles, and Bombs: How Economics Explains Military History:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. GOOD AND INFORMATIVE By John Fahey Interesting insights and useful source. 17 of 18 people found the following review helpful. Economics Applied to Military History By I. Martinez-Ybor This pioneering work is not a military history narrative, though much of it there is, but the application

of economic principles and theory to select socio-military developments in history, seeking to demonstrate the clarity of analysis the rigor of such application can bring to a field which seems to have hitherto lacked much formal structure. The famed WWI Schlieffen Plan (there's controversy about the extent to which the Germans actually implemented it fully, but the authors take it as given) provides the springboard for a discussion of opportunity costs (the real cost of X is the Y you are giving up by doing X) as applied to the strategic and operational choices in WWI to which are added the asymmetries in information between combatants. The authors use the Schlieffen Plan analysis to introduce their methodology, a good and clear starting point because there is an actual war-making plan involved. Having thus established an analytical template, they go back in history to medieval times and move forward with particularly interesting sections on the American Civil War, the strategic bombing campaign of Germany during WWII, France's decision to develop nuclear weapons, and, of contemporary interest but not really based on contemporary choices, the long history of "condottieri" (private contractors) to wage war ("provide security"). Afghanistan and Iraq are not covered as those theatres are still active, so it is premature to draw conclusions. One learned in school that an objective of theory is to reduce variables to a meaningful few. This work is positing a template for military historiography (though, not an exclusive one). In the process, the authors are truly compelling in their advocacy of looking at war with the tools of economic analysis, for a simpler, keener understanding of the meaningful forces at work. Human suffering is indeed part of the calculus, as the section on WWII strategic bombing of Germany shows that, ironically, rather than demoralize the German folk into submission, all evidence points to it having stiffened resistance. Thus indeed what was intended as a strategic campaign in effect became a tactical one. There is an introductory chapter on Economics explaining the concepts used. Each chapter has clear, useful matrices and charts throughout the work summarizing the analysis applied. Readers unacquainted with Economics as a discipline ought not to be intimidated as the book is written for the general reader. And it is an engrossing read if history is an area of interest to you. Unfortunately, whatever aggressive tendencies seem germane to humankind have had their most effective expression in waging war. It seems to be a lasting condition, however rationalized or just the cause. The analytical tools Messrs. Brauer and van Tuyl advocate increase our understanding of a regrettable but very real and probably permanent aspect of our existence. It may be opportune to also recommend Chris Hedges' "War is a Force That Gives us Meaning." 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An elegant fusion of history and basic economics By Grant Gibbs This is a well written economic analysis of various historical developments and events regarding warfare. My only criticism is that more depth was given to the history than to the economics...if you have already taken several courses of economics, you barely need to glance at the beginning chapter which delineates the basic principles of modern economics. Granted, the author is writing for a general audience, but I still thought that the historical content outweighed the economic analysis.

Castles, Battles, and Bombs reconsiders key episodes of military history from the point of view of economics; with dramatically insightful results. For example, when looked at as a question of sheer cost, the building of castles in the High Middle Ages seems almost inevitable: though stunningly expensive, a strong castle was far cheaper to maintain than a standing army. The authors also reexamine the strategic bombing of Germany in World War II and provide new insights into France's decision to develop nuclear weapons. Drawing on these examples and more, Brauer and Van Tuyl suggest lessons for today's military, from counterterrorist strategy and military manpower planning to the use of private military companies in Afghanistan and Iraq. "In bringing economics into assessments of military history, [the authors] also bring illumination. . . . [The authors] turn their interdisciplinary lens on the mercenary arrangements of Renaissance Italy; the wars of Marlborough, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon; Grant's campaigns in the Civil War; and the strategic bombings of World War II. The results are invariably stimulating." —Martin Walker, *Wilson Quarterly* "This study is serious, creative, important. As an economist I am happy to see economics so professionally applied to illuminate major decisions in the history of warfare." —Thomas C. Schelling, Winner of the 2005 Nobel Prize in Economics