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Holy Wars: 3000 Years of Battles in the Holy Land

Gary L. Rashba

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Today's Arab-Israeli conflict, ever-present in the news, is merely the latest iteration of an unending history of violence in the Holy Land?a region that is unsurpassed as witness to a kaleidoscopic military history involving forces from across the world and throughout the millennia.

Holy Wars describes 3,000 years of war in the Holy Land with the unique approach of focusing on pivotal battles or campaigns, beginning with the Israelites' capture of Jericho and ending with Israel’s last full-fledged assault against Lebanon. Its 17 chapters stop along the way to examine key battles fought by the Philistines, Assyrians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Crusaders, and Mamluks, the latter clash, at Ayn Jalut, comprising the first time the Mongols suffered a decisive defeat.

The modern era saw the rise of the Ottomans, and an incursion by Napoleon who only found bloody stalemate outside the walls of Akko (Acre). The Holy Land became a battlefield again in World War I when the British fought the Turks. The nation of Israel was forged in conflict during its 1948 War of Independence, and subsequently found itself in desperate combat, often against great odds, in 1956 and 1967, and then it was surprised by a massive two-pronged assault in 1973.

By focusing on the climax of each conflict, while carefully setting each stage, Holy Wars allows the reader to examine an extraordinary breadth of military history, glimpsing in one volume the evolution of warfare over the centuries as well as the enduring status of the Holy Land as a battleground.

GARY L. RASHBA , the author of more than 30 articles on defense, aerospace and international topics, graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1990 and currently lives in Israel with his wife and two children.

REVIEWS

“Employing a variety of sources from the Old Testament to modern scholarly works, Rashba presents a compelling tale of how this spiritually and politically charged area of the globe has long been a place of pivotal battles.”
Library Journal, October 2011

“…effectively traces the military history of the Holy Land and examines the tactics, motivations, and capabilities of the armies that through the millennia have warred for dominion over the sacred and all too often blood soaked region. "
Military History, January 2012

“…a handy little volume that will be of interest to both experts on the region and to those approaching its history for the first time.”
Miniature Wargames February 2012

“…so much information in such a pleasant lucid read; should be a must for every journalist or diplomat

stationed in the region."
Jerusalem Post,February 2012

"…Beginning with the Israelites' capture of Jericho and concluding with the most recent conflicts fought by modern Israel, HOLY WARS describes 3000 years of war in the Holy Land, uniquely focusing on pivotal battles or campaigns to tell the story of each historical period. HOLY WARS brings these conflicts to life in a readable work meant for the layman."
Jewish Magazine

"…sharply honed narrative…excellent, well-researched…By including all major battles and conflicts from the biblical era to the present situation, Rashba has provided scholars and journalists as well as general readers with a convenient narrative of the centuries of conflict in the land whose inhabitants continue to pray for peace in a highly readable and accessible volume."
St Louis Jewish Light

"…lively and easily readable (not always the case with military historians!)"
Military Modelcraft International

"...focuses the scene on a particularly intense battle. The episodic treatment works, giving the author the opportunity to tell the history of an entire war without stepping too far away from the action. His use of the language of military strategy strengthens his effort to bring verisimilitude to what, in many chapters, such as the struggle of David with Goliath, are events so shrouded by time that the facts have to be invented or embellished. One of the advantages of Rashba's broad scope is to watch the technology and tactics of war change. From slingshot to Russian MiG, from long, slow sieges to ultra rapid attacks, from Saladin to Allenby, one thing is clear - the Holy Land is no stranger to war."
Jewish Book Council

"…offers a unique and valuable account of centuries of history since the Israelites conquered the land until the 1982 invasion of Lebanon…well researched…"
Toronto Jewish Chronicle

"…selection of battles and campaigns is good and comprehensive…. is one of the best surveys of the Holy Land I have ever run across and I am certainly glad I did. This book should be on the shelf of anyone who seeks to understand the history behind the hatreds evidenced in modern Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank"
Military History-us.com, Battles and Book Reviews

"The Holy Land has been a blood-soaked battleground throughout military history. By focusing on this region that is so sacred to Jews, Christians and Moslems alike, Rashba delivers a compelling combat chronicle of the evolution of warfare and momentous events"

Toy Soldier and Model Figure

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