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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