



# Military History: " Prehistoric to Present "

*Edited by Paul F. Kisak*

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Of the many cave paintings of the Upper Paleolithic, none depict people attacking other people. The only rock art that depicts violence between hunter-gatherers comes from a unique Northern Australian sequence that began approximately 10,000 years ago. Skeletal and artifactual evidence of Paleolithic intergroup violence is absent as well. The first archaeological record of what could be a prehistoric battle is at the 14,340-to-13,140-year old Mesolithic site known as Cemetery 117, located on the Nile near the Egypt-Sudan border. It contains a large number of bodies, many with arrowheads embedded in their skeletons, which indicates that they may have been the casualties of a battle. Some question this conclusion by arguing that the bodies may have accumulated over many decades, and may even be evidence of the murder of trespassers rather than actual battles. Nearly half of the bodies are female, and this fact also causes some to question the argument for large-scale warfare. Early war was influenced by the development of bows, maces, and slings. The bow seems to have been the most important weapon in early warfare, in that it enabled attacks to be launched with far less risk to the attacker when compared to the risk involved in *mêlée* combat. While there are no cave paintings of battles between men armed with clubs, the development of the bow is concurrent with the first known depictions of organized warfare consisting of clear illustrations of two or more groups of men attacking each other. These figures are arrayed in lines and columns with a distinctly garbed leader at the front. Some paintings even portray still-recognizable tactics like *flankings* and *envelopments*. This book gives a great overview of military history throughout the historical record.

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