



## Epidemics and War: The Impact of Disease on Major Conflicts in History

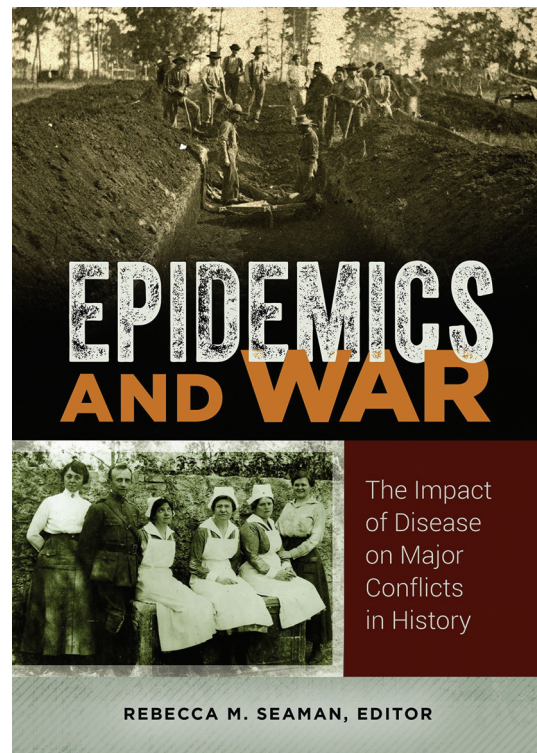
**Title:** Epidemics and War: The Impact of Disease on Major Conflicts in History

**Editor:** Rebecca M. Seaman

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The book "Epidemics and War: The Impact of Disease on Major Conflicts in History" was published in April 2018 by a renowned American publisher of academic and scientific literature ABC-CLIO. The editor of the book is Rebecca M. Seaman, director of the Social Sciences and Humanities Division at the Olympic College in Bremerton, USA, while the authors of chapters in the book are experts in the fields of medical, historical and military sciences. A total of 340 pages, written in a clear and understandable style, show the effects of infectious diseases on military conflicts and battles throughout history, with special emphasis on sources of infection, modes of transmission, consequences for the warring parties, but also the consequences of the epidemic after the conflict. Each chapter in this book deals with one specific disease and focuses on a specific war conflict.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part covers three infectious diseases that are still a great unknown. The

Athenian plague is the name for the epidemic of an infectious disease that appeared in Athens in 430 BC during the Peloponnesian War. The second epidemic of an infectious disease of unknown origin broke out in the Roman Empire in 165 AD during the war with the Parthians and lasted intermittently for the next 15 years. In the history of medicine, it has been recorded as Antonine Plague. The third mysterious contagious disease presented in this part of the book influenced the outcome of the civil wars in medieval England, known as the Wars of the Roses, where during the decisive battle of Bosworth in 1485, soldiers from both warring sides, the Lancaster and York dynasties, suddenly fell ill. This disease, which has appeared on several occasions since then, is called the English sweating sickness.

The second part of the book deals with epidemics of infectious diseases caused by bacteria and their impact on war conflicts. This section presents consequences of the Black

Death on the wars fought in the 14th century, the typhus epidemic during Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812, and the cholera epidemic during the Crimean War (1854–1855), the epidemic of typhoid fever during the Spanish-American War in 1898, concluding with the epidemic of diphtheria during the Tajik War in the first half of the 1990s.

Virus epidemics are the subject of the third part of the book. The smallpox epidemic decimated armies of the Spanish colonies in America during 16th and 17th centuries, but also the conflicting parties during the American War of Independence in the period 1775–1783. The epidemic of yellow fever literally destroyed the French army sent to quell the slave revolt in the Caribbean colony, which led to the success of the Haitian revolution in 1803. The First World War was marked by epidemics of chickenpox, but also by one of the deadliest pandemics in the history of mankind, known as the Spanish flu. War conflicts on the African continent over the past century have affected the spread of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), while in Bosnia, 15 years after the end of the conflict, a mumps epidemic broke out as a direct result of the lack of vaccination due to war.

The fourth part of the book discusses epidemics of infectious diseases of mixed origin with an emphasis on epi-

demics of dysentery and pneumonia during the American Civil War, as well as malaria in the Vietnam War.

At the end, biographies of the authors of the chapters, bibliography, as well as an index of terms are given.

In the midst of the COVID-19 coronavirus disease pandemic and the continuing armed conflict in the Middle East, the book "Epidemics and War: The Impact of Disease on Major Conflicts in History" is a significant work that introduces readers to the consequences of infectious disease epidemics on the battlefield.

The book is intended for epidemiologists, infectologists, medical historians, military historians, medical service officers, as well as all other readers interested in this field.

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