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★**The Definitive Visual History of War: From Bronze-Age Battles to 21st Century Conflict.** DK. Oct. 2009. 512p. photogs. maps. index. ISBN 978-0-7566-5572-3. \$50. REF

DK has built a reputation for publishing lavishly illustrated, attractive, and informative reference titles. With the help of editorial consultant Saul David (Univ. of Buckingham) and a select group of British military historians, the publisher's latest offering does not disappoint. From civilization's beginnings in ancient Sumer, *War's* coverage is stunning. Here, with full-color maps, paintings, photographs, and crisp, lucid prose are examinations of battles both familiar and obscure. From the Punic wars to the Crusades to the wars of the league of Cognac and modern conflicts like those in the former Yugoslavia, *War* is an outstanding catalog of conflict. Each of the seven chapters—"War in the Ancient World," "War in the Mediaeval World," "Early Modern Warfare," "The Age of Revolution," "The Dawn of Mechanized Warfare," "Era of the World Wars," and "Conflicts After World War II"—opens with a time line and is peppered with sidebars of military superlatives such as youngest commanders, famous female warriors, and even landmark war movies. Chapters are separated by sections comparing various implements of war throughout the ages. The book closes with the directory: a chronological overview of the major conflicts of the past 5000 years, an invaluable reference in its own right. Important for a work that examines the arc of thousands of years of war, many of the battles are viewed through a lens that highlights the interconnected nature of wars, like the Iran-Iraq War and the Gulf War that occurred shortly after. **BOTTOM LINE** Incomparable. Aptly titled, this is the definitive visual history of large-scale human conflict. Numerous encyclopedias exist that examine a single war, or perhaps conflict-laden periods, but only *War* possesses such breadth and visual appeal. An essential reference title for all libraries.—**Daniel Sifton, Cariboo Regional Dist. Lib., Williams Lake, B.C.**