

USAGES OF WAR ON LAND

"The fact that such limitations of the unrestricted and reckless application of all the available means for the conduct of war, and thereby the humanization of the customary methods of pursuing war, really exist, and are actually observed by the armies of all civilized states, has in the course of the nineteenth century often led to attempts to develop, to extend, and thus to make universally binding these pre-existing usages of war; to elevate them to the level of laws binding nations and armies; in other words, to create a law of war. All these attempts have hitherto, with some few exceptions to be mentioned later, completely failed. If, therefore, in the following work the expression 'the law of war' is used, it must be understood that by it is meant not a written law introduced by the international agreements, but only a reciprocity of mutual agreement—a limitation of arbitrary behavior, which custom and conventionality, human friendliness and a calculating egotism have erected, but for the observance of which there exists no express sanction, but only 'the fear of reprisals' decides."

UNLIMITED DESTRUCTION THE END OF WAR

Put in plain language, these passages mean that there is no law of war which may not be broken at the dictates of interest. Unlimited destruction is the end, and only fear of reprisals need limit the means. The sentimental humanitarianism and flabby emotion which prevail elsewhere have no place in the bright lexicon of the German officer. "By steeping himself in military history," the manual clearly states, "an