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OPINION | LETTERS

The Laws of War Didn't Impede Past U.S. Victories

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A still from the "The Pacific War in Color : The Enemy Underground" shows Marines on a ship. PHOTO: SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL

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In a [July 24 letter](#), Samuel Frazer almost seems to imply that the laws of war didn't apply during World War II, and that in recent times they have impeded U.S. military operations. Efforts to create modern-day rules on warfare began over 150 years ago and culminated in the Geneva Conventions and other treaties, many of which were signed and ratified by the U.S. Even before both world wars, The Hague Conventions prohibited the killing of wounded soldiers, using weapons in a way to cause unnecessary suffering and attacking undefended towns, among other rules. Their adoption didn't come about because of weakening American resolve in combat. Political leaders and battlefield commanders around the world saw the horrors of war and decided that adherence to stronger and detailed standards would better protect our service members who may have to make the ultimate sacrifice.

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