

ultimately rewarding for those with a special interest in Nordic security, maritime strategy, geopolitics, or the international politics of "signalling" (what Tunander refers to as the "body language of the superpowers"). The heart of the book concerns the US Maritime Strategy and its impact on northern Europe, but it also touches on Nordic security policies more generally, Swedish defence doctrine in particular, and the well-publicized incidents of Soviet submarine intrusions into Swedish waters.

The author – a young Swede at the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo – demonstrates a deep knowledge of all of these matters, as well as some of the more arcane fields of international relations theory, geopolitics, and semiotics. The book itself suffers somewhat from a rather heavy academic style, sometimes opaque language, repetition, and cluttered, computer-generated graphics that are less than pleasing to the eye. But none of this should deter serious readers from perusing it to their benefit.

Mr. Tunander is no great fan of the Maritime Strategy, but his examination of it is balanced and fair. He identifies three main functions of the strategy's emphasis on threatening Soviet ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs): altering the nuclear balance, protecting the Atlantic sea lanes (by forcing the Soviets to devote all of their energies to defending their home waters), and deterring Soviet attack in areas vital to the West, such as the Persian Gulf. Of these, he rejects the "technical credibility" of the first two but accepts that of the third. In his view, uncertainty about the US threat to Soviet SSBNs should "underline the importance of Soviet restraint in other parts of the world."

What makes the book unique, however, is its extended discussion of the Maritime Strategy from a European – particularly a North European – perspective. The Norwegians, he points out, have been ambivalent about the strategy, on the one hand welcom-

ing an increased US presence off their coasts, while on the other hand fearing the export of a superpower conflict in the Third World to Northern Europe.

According to Tunander, Moscow will do all it can to avoid a conflict in such a strategically sensitive (and vulnerable) area, but if it believes a US attack is imminent, as a result of its action somewhere else in the world, it is likely to strike hard at Scandinavia. Furthermore, he interprets more provocative Soviet submarine activity in Swedish waters in recent years as a signal, aimed primarily at Washington, of its ability and willingness to do so.

Tunander shows how the North Europeans, who once sought to insulate themselves from the rivalries and tensions of Central Europe, now seek to link themselves more closely to what they consider to be a comparative oasis of stability and detente there. They are also, as he points out, increasingly seeking to extend the arms control measures being implemented on the European continent to the less clearly-defined Northern sea areas.

In this respect, he is remarkably optimistic, given his account of the deep-rootedness of the Maritime Strategy. Despite the latter, he foresees the extension of arms control measures to the sea as inevitable, driven by such factors as fiscal constraints, an increasing unwillingness on the part of the superpowers to jeopardize the survivability of key naval assets in forward areas, and gradual US awareness of the counterproductive impact of the Maritime Strategy on ally and foe alike.

– Ron Purver

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### **Wartime: Understanding and Behaviour in the Second World War** Paul Fussell

*New York: Oxford University Press, 1989, 330 pp., \$24.95 cloth*

Two books written during the last decade have permanently altered the standards for acceptable writing in the English language on the subject of large-scale combat:

*The Face of Battle* by John Keegan and the first book on warfare by Mr. Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*. Between them, the effect has been to render shallow and foolish any writer about war who resorts to words like "the fallen" and "sacrifice," or who does not attempt to enter into the combat experience with a complete and sympathetic understanding of the soldier's physical and emotional world.

Unlike his earlier work which was scholarly in approach (Fussell is a professor of English literature), *Wartime* is an angry and often bitter assault on what he sees as a widespread public complacency, as well as a wholly sanitized "and Norman Rockwellized, not to mention Disneyfied" view of the soldiers' experience – especially in the last great war. And Fussell minces no words about what he set out to do: "For almost the past fifty years the Allied war has been sanitized and romanticized almost beyond recognition by the sentimental, the loony patriotic, the ignorant and the blood-thirsty. I have tried to balance the scales." For his ammunition he draws upon his own grim experience as a junior officer in the US army in Europe, and his formidable talents and knowledge as social critic and cultural historian. It is a potent and wrenching combination.

The book proceeds methodically to explore every crevice and crack in the yawning gap between what a combat soldier in WWII was told he would find before arriving at the front, what he actually experienced when he got there and what the public at home was told about it all. Through high culture and low, in film, in newspapers and on the radio, the home front was fed sheer nonsense about the unfolding horror on the battlefields. The aim, of course, was to keep up morale, but Fussell contends that the endless "boy scoutism" of official and unofficial propaganda only made the soldiers' lives more miserable and it made them angry – they had to live with the daily idiocy and terror of military life on the front lines.

He reserves particular venom for the *Time-Life* book series on WWII which, in his view, has done "more than perhaps any other popular account of the war to ascribe clear, and usually noble, cause and purpose to accidental and demeaning events." Fussell devotes a whole chapter to accidental killings and foolish blunders that made one's own army as dangerous to life and limb as the enemy's.

Much of Fussell's account is darkly funny. Chapters on "chickenshit" – "behaviour that makes military life worse than it need be" and which can be "recognized instantly because it never has anything to do with winning the war"; and the suffering caused by constant deprivation and danger, "Drinking Far Too Much, Copulating Too Little," will cause open laughter.

Indignation runs throughout, but surfaces as barely controlled fury in the final chapter "The Real War Will Never Get in the Books." Fussell tries to convey the real war here, complete with graphic description by himself and others of what even today remains unsaid and unseen in mass media treatment of combat – modern war conducted with explosives kills people by dismembering them. It is what every soldier fears, and should he escape being wounded himself, must watch and smell and touch.

Combat is, of course, madness and so it drives people crazy. Even armies have learned this, which is why in Vietnam soldiers were not sent for the duration, as in WWII, but for a fixed term of a year – "the American military learned ... that men will inevitably go mad in battle and that no appeal to patriotism, manliness, or loyalty to the group will ultimately matter."

– Michael Bryans

*Mr. Bryans is editor of Peace & Security and co-creator of the NFB film series War.* □

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