



Trained to Kill: Soldiers at War

Theodore Nadelson

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In two decades of clinical work with Vietnam veterans, psychiatrist Theodore Nadelson sought to understand a seeming paradox about his patients: even veterans being treated for post traumatic stress disorder often still felt attracted to the danger and violence of combat and killing. How this could be possible became a central focus of Nadelson's work and thought, as he looked to veterans' stories and within himself for pieces of the human puzzle.

This compelling book is the result of that exploration. In it, Nadelson confronts a dark side of human psychology with sensitivity and depth, revealing startling truths about the allure of violence. Among the topics he addresses are the ways in which the concept of war shapes boys' lives from an early age, what happens when killing becomes a job, and how memories of the thrill of combat affect a soldier after the war is over. He probes the aftermath of September 11, including the historic implications of women's experience in the military. A veteran himself, the author weaves together insights from his own clinical and military experience and from the moving narratives of former soldiers with his thoughtful analysis of readings from world literature to answer tough questions: What does our attraction to killing mean for the future of war and civilization? What implications does it have for the way we understand peacetime violence in our society?

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