



## BEN PASTOR: THE TOP 5 WARTIME BOOKS

BOOK REVIEWS

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*"Simply the finest war novel by a Catholic pacifist..."*

*Author Ben Pastor picks her top books about wartime*

### **1. *The Radetzky March*, Joseph Roth**

The incomparable grace of worlds bound for disaster. It opens like a Viennese waltz and grows into a resounding military tune, but the steps remain impeccable.

Lieutenant Trotta is Europe between Neverland and the Holocaust.

### **2. *The Red Badge of Courage*, Stephen Crane**

The American Civil War bursts into a vibrant, impressionistic play of colors and nuances: out of the bright stains unexpectedly rises a powerful fresco. If Gauguin had written war novels, this would be his best.

### **3. *And where were you, Adam?*, Heinrich Böll**

Simply the finest war novel by a Catholic pacifist: the swing on a playground becomes a metaphor of World War Two. Taut, heartrending, full of human pity, it raises the moral ante set by HM Remarque.

#### **4. *The Things They Carried*, Tim O'Brien**

Vietnam is to the US what in Arthurian legend is King Amfortas' never-healing wound. But the burden implicit in the title also illustrates the drama of arrogant self-perception weighing down the western world.

#### **5. *The Night of the Generals*, Hans Hellmut Kirst**

A little masterpiece of detection at the service of war narrative: or is it vice versa? Major Grau – like Jules Maigret – is the quintessential honorable investigator in a politically and morally bankrupt society.

*Tin Sky* by Ben Pastor is out in paperback (Bitter Lemon Press, £8.99)