

Ideal soldier analysis



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Hartman, whom he shoots and kills, then turns his gun on himself, taking his own life.

Pyle's character displays complete inability to change from a citizen into a soldier, and the mindset which marines must assume. Many people are incapable of reaching the level of discipline and skill required of a soldier. Also a few individuals take their training, abilities, and objectives above the expectations of the military. Some lay aside the moral boundaries of an ideal soldier. An example of "the extreme soldier" is Sgt.

Barnes from Platoon. From his first scene, it becomes clear that Sgt.

Barnes is a seasoned veteran of war, showing numerous battle scars. Sgt. Barnes does not hesitate to leap into action, readily taking the lives of the Viet Cong and protecting his men, all while issuing commands and taking control of the situation. During battle, Barnes proves to be an exceptional soldier and leader, even when a high ranking officer, Lt.

Wolfe, is unable to cope with the situation. Barnes takes control over Wolfe, the situation, and commands the soldiers. By taking over and criticizing Wolfe, Sgt. Barnes gained the respect and trust of many soldiers, yet there were also those who disagreed with his tactics.

These men did not only object to Barnes because of how he handled the situation, but also because of a conflict which arose between Sgt. Barnes and Sgt. Elias, Barnes showed a low level of regard for Elias and his men. Due to their trust and alliance with Sgt. Elias, the group of men assumed a position of doubt and distrust when the argument between Barnes and Elias sparks.

On a future excursion the platoon stumbles across a Vietnamese village which Barnes accused of aiding the Viet Cong combatants. In his rage Sgt. Barnes interrogates a villager and continues to execute the man when he is unable to give any information.

Turning to the man's daughter he threatens to kill her as well unless given the information he requested, but was stopped by Sgt. Elias.

Later in the movie, as the marines evacuate their area of occupation, Elias separates from the platoon in order to flank the Viet Cong. Learning of this, Barnes chases after Elias into the jungle and kills him, reporting that he had found Elias's body riddled with VC bullets. After the realization that Elias's men knew of Barnes fragging Elias, he confronted them about their distaste for him along with their addiction to pot, telling them " I don't need this shit to get away from reality.

I am reality! " (Sgt. Barnes, Platoon 1986).

This bold statement shows that Sgt. Barnes does not view himself as a soldier, but almost as an invincible God of war who had no fear of combat or death. This self image causes Barnes to act on more extreme levels than that of a normal soldier, and makes Barnes more volatile and less predictable. As the final battle begins, Barnes shows his inconsideration for his fellow marines as he denies Sgt. O'Neill leave as he pleaded for it. Even as a loyal companion of Sgt.

Barnes, O'Neill received no more grace than one of Barnes's enemies would receive.

Moving into the battle, Barnes reveals his ruthless side by slaughtering Viet Cong soldiers; even as he runs out of ammunition he proceeds to kill his enemies with his shovel and bare fists. Another marine stumbles across Sgt. Barnes as he kills the Vietnamese. In his rage Barnes attacked his fellow marine, attempting to kill him, only to be stopped by an airstrike. Barnes makes the statement, “ Elias was a crusader.

Now I got no problem with any man does what he's told, but when he don't, the machine breaks down. And when the machine breaks down, WE break down. And I'm not gonna allow that, from any of you. Not one. (Sgt.

Barnes Platoon 1986) Through his actions, Barnes showed no regard for the ' machine' when it came to his personal duty and vendetta. His character showed the extreme of a soldier. He magnified the aspects and expectations of a marine to the point that he became a renegade. It is not simply the skill and motivation of a soldier which makes him or her an ideal soldier, but also his or her ability to think logically and make humane decisions. While many are incapable of becoming an ideal soldier, and others are too excessive in their duties, there are those who are capable of forming into the perfect oldier.

Chris Taylor from Platoon fits this description very well. Taylor first appears on base as a nervous, overwhelmed soldier who had recently completed training. Instantly thrown into his platoon, Taylor becomes exposed to the manual labor of a soldier and his first taste of combat. When Taylor first experiences the Viet Cong he is posted on night watch. As the enemy appears directly in front of Taylor's eyes, he freezes up and cannot decide

what to do, failing to detonate the claymores which he was placed in charge of. Because of his hesitation, a fellow soldier is shot and later dies.

This situation brings to Taylor the realization of what is to come. During his next experience in combat, Taylor successfully kills his first VC and thus gains the courage to advance and aid his fellow marines. He follows every order with only slight hesitation. This small change in attitude showed that Taylor was able and willing to take the life of another in order to preserve his own and that of his squad mates. Further into the storyline, as the platoon raids the Vietnamese village, Taylor threatens and beats a villager, expressing his dominance as a soldier, yet refrains from killing the man.

Soon after the platoon has begun to destroy the village, Taylor comes across a group of fellow marines who have taken a young Vietnamese girl from the village, with intentions of raping the young woman. Instantly Taylor jumps to the defense of the young girl, pushing away the other marines saying " She's a fucking human being man! " (Taylor, Platoon 1986) This outburst towards his fellow troops shows that while Taylor is capable of taking a life, he also has respect for the life of others, and is willing to protect it.

Taylor's true personality is also revealed as he revisits his experiences, saying " I finally found it, way down here in the mud. Maybe from down here I can start up again, be something I can be proud of, without having to fake it, be a fake human being. " (Chris Taylor, Platoon 1986) As his time passes in Vietnam, Taylor becomes a more hardened soldier, taking up the slack of those who cannot handle the load, and holding the battlefield. When Taylor

experiences the death of Elias, he becomes enraged and eventually attempts to kill Barnes, once more showing his depth of character.

Like the other Platoon characters, Taylor is seen at his most extreme as the final firefight begins to take place. Instantly recognizing and analyzing the enemy, Taylor is able to cut down an entire squad within seconds and predicts how the VC would handle his bunker. He now can escape the bunker seconds before it is struck by an RPG. Taylor's aggression encourages Francis to fight along with him, repeatedly dropping the Viet Cong as they came into sight. Rushing into the enemy, Taylor is able to defeat every opponent he encounters.

Taylor's character is made distinct with his ability to execute his job efficiently and correctly.

Seeing Taylor transform from a nervous man into a seasoned veteran shows the trials and change which a soldier must acquire. The ideal soldier is not a machine who has killed countless enemies without a second thought, or one who simply does his duty. Nor is he a nervous man who does not have the courage to defend himself or others, and he is not the one who makes heartless actions or decisions. A perfect soldier is capable of leading others and effectively completing his duties.

He can protect himself and those around him while making logical decisions, taking the lives of others into account, taking or protecting lives as necessary.