

Platoon verses the things they carried exploring the men of vietnam.



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The movie *Platoon*, and the novel *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien are both very similar in many ways, for instance, they both deal with what the men who were sent off to Vietnam and had to go through, physical, mental, and emotional trials. In both the novel and the movie, the men were shipped off to a foreign land to fight a gruesome war. These men are portrayed as innocent men, who because of all of the things they had to go through, and the things they've seen, and felt, have become hard, very violent men.

These men, young boys in most cases, have a very hard time dealing with where they are, and the very intense things they have to deal with every day. Often times it leads the men to not only depend on each other, but become a sort of brotherhood. This strong sense of need for other people can also cause fights within the platoon of men, and this is why in the middle of *Platoon* Charlie Sheen's character says "I can't believe we're fighting each other, when we should be fighting them." *The Things They Carried*, depicts what the men had to go through on a more psychological level. O'Brien often showed the men in a more philosophical light, and even though the men were not educated properly, they knew what they needed to know to stay alive. A portion of *The Things They Carried* was dedicated to the main characters (O'Brien) struggle with not wanting to go to Vietnam, and how close he was to running away from his problems, and the only reason he did go was because he was afraid. The fear that pushed him to go to Vietnam was the same fear that kept him moving while he was in Vietnam.

All of the men that were in O'Connell's platoon were forced to be in Vietnam, fighting for their country, but unlike O'Connell many of the men in his platoon wanted to be there. Not in the sense that these men wanted to be in a foreign land getting shot at every day, but in the sense that these men had nothing to go back to. While some had girlfriends, and family to go home to, they had no job, and most of them had no idea what life was other than fighting. They were fighting with themselves to depend on other people, fighting with each other to cooperate, and fighting constantly to stay alive for one more day. Oliver Stone wrote and directed the movie *Platoon*, in which he shows the perils that go on within the minds of the men and what craziness that caused during the Vietnam War. With characters like Bunny and Junior who represent the most uneducated men, fighting a war in the most violent era, where causing a "gook" pain was just a way to release the anguish felt as they just had to watch a fellow soldier die. When a person under extreme stress is faced day in and day out with the idea of dying, it causes the human mind to get aggressive and hard. The men in *Platoon* all had something in common, a want and a need to stay alive.

While you can immediately see the differences between the men in *Platoon*, in their education, and even their thought processes, these men all needed each other to survive, and therefore, became a brotherhood. The human mind has a constant need to be in contact with other people, building connections with people who can help you survive, and this is what creates the constant bickering between the leaders of the platoon. Those men who witnessed their leaders start to lose control, and then took it upon themselves to take control, and there in that moment is when you can see

them snap. For example, before the men invaded the village where Bunny killed a man with the end of his gun, and Sergeant Barnes shot a woman in front of all of the villagers, there was obviously tension between Barnes and Sergeant Elias. Because they both have had to witness so much violence, they learned to deal the men they were in charge of in very different ways. This tension is what caused the men to act out in such a violent manner.

In *The Things They Carried*, O'Connell Brien said that the stories he was telling were not stories about war, but they were stories about love. (p. 85)

Although it is easy to forget what the men who went away to war had to go through, for them it is an everyday occurrence to have flash backs and to be drawn back into the fighting mentality.

In *Platoon*, Bunny said, "I told the padre the truth man, I like it here. Get to do what you want, nobody fucks with you. The only worry you got is dying." This mentality is very common throughout *Platoon* and *The Things They Carried* because people who are uneducated or come from a certain life style, it is rather acceptable to act in a manner that is more violent than others. These two ideas may seem rather different at first glance, but at a closer look, it becomes very evident that they have a lot in common. Both men O'Connell Brien, and Bunny were dealing with extreme pressure and violence day in and day out. What Bunny is expressing is his feelings about why he doesn't want to go back to the U. S.

where he would be alone and forced to fit in a mold of the average American, while all he really knows is killing. On the other hand O'Connell Brien is saying that when he came back to America and tries to tell people what he

witnessed, they don't understand that what he is telling them is not about the death and the pain he witnessed, but the love that he had for the men that he was out there with day in and day out. It is easy to see where the young men in Platoon and The things They Carried got lost in battle, and why none of them could ever come back from Vietnam the same. To see and witness so much death, and destruction at such a young age, it changes a person, makes them hard, it is what makes them a soldier.