

The things they carried by tim o'brien

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Civil War General Sherman once said, " War is hell. " He was right. In the short story " The Things They Carried," Tim O'Brien shows us the hell that our soldiers suffered. The narrator shows us a captivating, and up-close story about our soldiers in the Vietnam War. While the title relates to the story about things carried, but the soldiers carry more than just the physical burdens-in many cases, they are weighed down by emotional baggage. The emotional baggage that lies heavy in their hearts outweighs the physical weight. In addition to the items that they must carry, they also carry personal mementos.

To show how much the soldiers are carrying the narrator tells us " things carried were largely determined by necessity. " Some of the necessities included, " P-38 can opener, pocket knives...candy, cigarettes...C rations and two or three canteen of water. Together, these items weighed between fifteen and twenty pounds..." The narrator goes on to give us even more detail about the things the soldiers carried; "... carried the standard M-16 gas-operated assault rifle. The weapon weighed 7. 5 pounds unloaded, 8. 2 pounds with its full twenty-round magazine.... grenade launcher, 5. pounds unloaded..." By telling us exactly what the men carried and how much it weighed, it gives us an insight on the physical burdens that the men had to carry. The narrator tells us that the intangible items that these men carried proved heavier than any backpack and gun. The main character in the story is Lieutenant Cross, platoon leader. He is in love with a young girl in the United States.

She is always on his mind and because he allows his thoughts to take him away and be with her. Because of this, he blames himself for the death of

another platoon member even though there was nothing he could have done to protect him. Lieutenant Cross felt the pain. He blamed himself. " " He pictured Martha's smooth young face, thinking he loved her more than anything, more than his men, and now Ted Lavender was dead because he love her so much and could not stop thinking about her. " I think here he is being a little unreasonable. His love for her didn't kill Lavender. He didn't feel only the burden of being responsible for Lavender's death, " it was the burden of being alive. " They all carried great emotional weight. " They carried all the emotional baggage of the men who might die.

Grief, terror, love, longing-these were the intangibles, but the intangibles had their own mass and specific gravity, they had tangible weight. " With all the physical and emotional things they carried, they also carried things that were close to their hearts. They carried mementos and other small weapons. " Mitchell Sanders carried brass knuckles. Kiowa carried his grandfathers feathered hatchet.... Kiowa always took along his New Testament...Lee Strunk carried his slingshot; ammo, he claimed, would never be a problem. " We're told that Lieutenant Cross carried letters from Martha in his rucksack, and pictures of her in his wallet and a pebble. ...Lieutenant Cross received a good-luck charm from Martha. It was a simple pebble, an ounce at most. "

These things, although that was something else they carried, I feel like that, these items are things that made them feel like there was a world outside the war. They carried a silent awe of the power of the weapons, which kept them alive by killing the enemy. They carried infection, the weak or wounded, the thumbs of slain Viet Cong, guilt, and the soil of Vietnam itself.

Perhaps the only certainty of a rather ambiguous war was that there would never be a shortage of things to carry.