Guideline Questions

What It Is Like To Go To War

`Preface and Chapter One:

*Temple of Mars*

1. In stating that he wants to share thoughts and experiences with young people preparing to go to war, Marlantes says, “Indeed, combat is like unsafe sex in that it’s a major thrill with possible horrible consequences.” How do you interpret this warning?
2. “I was in a sacred space, totally unprepared to be there.” “The Marine Corps taught me how to kill but it didn’t teach me how to deal with killing.” React to this.
3. “I had entered the temple of Mars, where not only were humans sacrificed, including me, but I was also the priest.” What does Marlantes mean by this comment and why is he haunted by the memory of that moment?
4. Why does Marlantes tell the reader that he resented the battalion chaplain for bringing the bottles of Southern Comfort to his firebase? “Inside, I was seething.”
5. In speaking of modern day combat, in the age of drones and missiles, Marlantes claims that “Death becomes an abstraction.” What does this mean to you and why does the author go on to say “What is at stake is not only the psyche of each young fighter but our humanity?”