

A TRUE HERO OF THE VIETNAM WAR, HUMANITY AND COUNTRY

EMMANUEL CHARLES MCCARTHY

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Killing in an unjust and immoral war is neither laudable nor heroic. Yet, Senator John McCain is constantly trumpeted by the corporate media as a war hero with special emphasis on his being a prisoner of war. He had the gall when he returned to Vietnam—decades after trying to destroy it and its people, while piloting a multimillion dollar jet armed with some of the most sophisticated and hellish weapons ever produced (high-tech anti-personal bombs, napalm, etc.)—to self righteously complain that when the Vietnamese stopped him from killing them and their children they did not treat him properly. However, it should be noted they did not kill him, as “an eye for an eye” morality could have easily justified. John McCain in fact has gone on to live a rich and full life, which is more than can be said for those Vietnamese, civilian and military, whom he murdered (unjustly killed) or cooperated with the murder of from his plane. Whether he or anyone else, personally considered at the time that doing the bidding of Johnson, Nixon, McNamara and Kissinger was murder is a very important point, when reconciliation before God is considered—if there is a God and if life is not merely an accumulation of spasms of pleasure and pain before total and permanent annihilation. But, in 2007 the whole world knows that the U.S. attack on and destruction of Vietnam and its people was, to use the words of Thomas Merton, “an overwhelming atrocity.” To continue today to refer to a person by the term “hero” who participated in this unjust human slaughter, for purposes of trying to morally prop up this prior act of wicked savagery, is more than ludicrous—it is participating in and perpetuating the evil out of which the Vietnam depravity arose.

“Hero” in reference to a person, who unjustifiably kills people, serves also as part of the indoctrination process for normalizing the evasion of truth, the denial of reality and the manufacturing of facts

that today allows those, who planned and executed the mass murder (unjust destruction) of hundreds of thousands of human beings in Iraq to be called “hero.” This propagandizing of the “hero” tag *vis-à-vis* those involved in an unjust and/or illegal war is also part of the spin (deception) required to justify in the eyes of ordinary people sending plane load after plane load of future “heroes” over to Vietnam yesterday, Iraq today and Iran tomorrow in order to continue the very profitable murder operation of a perpetual war economy under some auspices or another, e.g., the Communist Chinese will overrun Vietnam within six months after the U.S. leaves; the radically hated U.S. is needed as a “peacekeeper” force in Iraq! Whatever the case that may be made for the “heroic” killing of other human beings in a just war—and I personally think that such a case cannot be made—it falls apart completely once the war is unjust and thereby the destruction of people becomes unjustified killing, murder. John McCain, John Kerry, John Murtha, Bob Kerry, etc., with their medals for homicide are not the heroes of the Vietnam War, the war in “the land of the burning children” as Daniel Berrigan accurately named it at the time.

So, what does an authentic American hero of the Vietnam War look like? He does not look like the U.S. jet pilot in Vietnam in 1966 whose photo and comments are included below. Rather, he looks like Dale Noyd.

Dale Noyd was a decorated Air Force fighter pilot, who was given a medal for landing a badly damaged, nuclear-armed F-100 Fighter at an English airfield. He also taught at the Air Force Academy. In 1966 after 11 years in the Air Force, he asked that he either be allowed to resign his commission or be classified as a conscientious objector because of his feelings about the Vietnam War. His request was

denied, and Dale Noyd took his case to federal court in Denver in March 1967.

NAPALM. The most effective “anti-personnel” weapon, it is euphemistically described as “unfamiliar cooking fluid” by those apologists for American military methods. They automatically attribute all napalm cases to domestic accidents caused by the people using gasoline instead of kerosene in their cooking stoves. Kerosene is far too expensive for the peasants, who normally use charcoal for cooking. The only “cooking fluid” they know is very “unfamiliar”—it is delivered through their roofs by U.S. planes.

Some of its finer selling points were explained to me by a pilot in 1966: “We sure are pleased with those back-room boys at Dow. The original product wasn’t so hot—if the gooks were quick they could scrape it off. So the boys started adding polystyrene—now it sticks like shit to a blanket. But then if the gooks jumped under water it stopped burning, so they started adding Willie Peter (WP—white phosphorous) so’s to make it burn better. It’ll even burn under water now. And just one drop is enough, it’ll keep on burning right down to the bone so they die anyway from phosphorous poisoning.”

VIETNAM, INC., PHILIP JONES GRIFFITHS, 2001, PP. 210-211.



The American Civil Liberties Union, which represented him, said it was the first lawsuit claiming conscientious objector status because of an opposition to a specific war. In December 1967, using a legal dodge (“We are not responsible here”), that echoed the defense offered by the German judges who were tried at Nuremberg for war crimes after World War II, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear his case, saying that the military had jurisdiction.

The Air Force then ordered Captain Noyd to train a pilot who was probably on the path toward Vietnam. Noyd refused and was court-martialed for disobeying an order.

During his military trial, the Military Court also availed itself of a position in direct contradiction to principles on which people were convicted at Nuremberg, namely, “Hand over your conscience to us, your moral objections notwithstanding—or else.” Captain Noyd’s belief in conscience that the Vietnam War was immoral and illegal was not ad-

ressed. The panel of 10 officers, who were all Vietnam veterans, did not allow discussion of his beliefs.

The central legal-moral issue, of whether his objecting to a particular war rather than all wars was legal, was ruled out as a matter of consideration by the Court. The U.S. Supreme Court for a second time refused his appeal to hear his case! Therefore the ultimate choice Captain Dale Noyd was given was to either abandon his conscience and become morally a murderer in his own eyes, i.e., take part in what he saw as the unjustified killing of human beings, or become a prisoner of war. Dale Noyd chose to be true to the truth of his conscience. He was sentenced to a year in prison, given a dishonorable discharge, and stripped of his pension and benefits.

This is what a Vietnam hero, a hero of humanity and of country looks like. It is Dale Noyd, whose life is a profile in courage on behalf of life, humanity and country.

It is Captain Dale Noyd whose bravery should be held up before those in the military today, including chaplains, who know in their consciences that this war on Iraq is unjust, perpetrated and sustained by a ceaseless flow of lethal lies—that it is nothing more or less than “big-time” murder. Most of all it is Dale Noyd’s integrity, his empathy for those being unjustly destroyed on all sides, his patriotism, his valor and his guts that should be deliberately and ceaselessly placed before the eyes of each and every U.S. Representative and Senator. Held up in front of them until every bloody one of them, who knows in his or her conscience that this war is grotesquely immoral and/or illegal, acts—without calculation concerning his or her personal political fortunes—to effectively and immediately put an end to it.

Dale Edwin Noyd joined the universal community of the dead on January 11, 2007.

The story ends here—or does it?