

Title:

Confessions Of A War Criminal

Word Count:

696

Summary:

I am a war criminal. Yes, you heard correctly—a war criminal! Let me explain why.

In 1971, then Lt. (j.g.) John Kerry testified before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee and portrayed American soldiers as murderers, rapists and torturers "who ravaged the countryside of South Vietnam . . . [and] razed villages in a fashion reminiscent of Genghis Khan." I don't know about the rape and torture part, but I do know that every time I took off on a mission in Vietnam I m...

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Article Body:

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In 1971, then Lt. (j.g.) John Kerry testified before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee and portrayed American soldiers as murderers, rapists and torturers "who ravaged the countryside of South Vietnam . . . [and] razed villages in a fashion reminiscent of Genghis Khan." I don't know about the rape and torture part, but I do know that every time I took off on a mission in Vietnam I made a sacred vow that any Viet Cong or North Vietnam Army soldier I caught attacking or trying to ambush our troops on the ground was going to suffer a lot of pain and probably lose his life. Is that any different than razing a village where insurgents hid during the day and launched attacks at night? I don't think so. As I see it, if the Americans who fought so valiantly on the ground during the Vietnam War are war criminals, then so am I.

Without question, John Kerry's characterization of American soldiers "terrorists," and the enemy as victims of a barbaric U.S. military which tortures and murders defenseless civilians was wildly popular with the likes of Jane Fonda and other members of the anti-war movement, and at the same time, launched a long and successful political career which culminated with his

unsuccessful bid for the presidency.

But 1971 was a long time ago. Is it really important that we discuss this issue now? For a special group of American heroes it is more important than ever, because they need to set the record straight. I am referring to those who were captured and held as prisoners of war. In 1971, many of our POWs were residing in conditions of unbelievable depravation in camps with euphemistic names like "The Hanoi Hilton," and "The Zoo." It was a life of misery, where torture and beatings were daily fare and many died of starvation and disease.

Most POWs never expected to be freed—especially since their captors told them that they would eventually be tried and executed for their war crimes. Imagine their despair when one of their own told the world that they were war criminals. The North Vietnamese government could not have asked for a better publicity agent than John Kerry!

I thought I would never say this, but here goes—thank God we live in a litigious society! A group of POWs, veterans, and other like-minded citizens have formed an organization called Vietnam Veterans Legacy Foundation (VVLFF).

The foundation recently filed a lawsuit on behalf of Carlton A. Sherwood, a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, against Kenneth J. Campbell and Jon Bjornson, two associates and aides of Kerry's during the 2004 presidential campaign, both of whom are Vietnam Veterans and longtime anti-war activists. The basis of the suit is too complicated to describe here, but you can read all the details on the VVLFF web site, which is <http://www.vvlf.org/>. In a nutshell, Mister Sherwood produced a documentary titled "Stolen Honor: Wounds That Never Heal." The film was never seen because Sinclair Broadcasting Company—the only network courageous enough to air the documentary—was forced to withdraw after Kerry associates threatened them with libel suits and even loss of their broadcasting license. If the law suit proceeds as planned, details of this effort, plus Kerry's activity in 1971 will be discussed in open court and become a matter of public record. And when that happens, a lot of liberals and antiwar activists are going to be very unhappy.

I am not an activist, much less a philanthropist. As a matter of fact, I am pretty much a political independent. But fair is fair, and when I learned that the VVLFF is struggling to fund this extremely important and historical lawsuit I reached for my billfold and put my money in the pot. You can do as you like, but I think that as a minimum, every American should go to the VVLFF web site and listen to their side of the story. It's the right thing to do. Once again, their web site is <http://www.vvlf.org/>.