



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on January 1, 2013

Why John Kerry Should Not Be Secretary of State

President Obama nominated John Kerry on December 21 to succeed Hillary Clinton as our nation's secretary of state. The president said of the Massachusetts senator that his "entire life has prepared him for this role" and that he will not "need a lot of on-the-job training." Recalling Kerry's past, Obama noted that his nominee for our nation's top diplomatic post "served with valor in Vietnam."



Obama and John Kerry don't want the American people to know the full story of Navy Lieutenant Kerry's three months of service in Vietnam in 1969, or how that brief deployment was surely not worthy of being described as "with valor." Arriving with a movie camera to document his every effort for possible use in future runs for political office, Kerry managed to earn three Purple Hearts, a Silver Star, and a Bronze Star in what amounted to "record time." The problem is that his wounds and his vaunted heroism were the stuff of fairy tales. Yes, he received the medals. But, no, he didn't deserve them.

Kerry's "valor" and the medals he received are regularly noted by Kerry himself and by the mass media whose personnel favor any left-winger. But truth needs to be told, as it was in the 2004 book *Unfit For Command: Swift Boat Veterans Speak Out Against John Kerry* by John O'Neill and Jerome Corsi. Kerry deftly worked the system to get the awards knowing full well that three Purple Hearts meant he could leave Vietnam and get away from combat. Instead of the normal year in the battle zone expected of all who served, Kerry spent a mere three months in action during the height of the conflict.

Kerry's service consisted of commanding what was termed a "Swift Boat," a small but speedy craft whose crew totaled six men and whose assignment included patrolling rivers and bays in the war zone. His first Purple Heart came after he obtained a self-inflicted nick in his arm, the result of his firing a grenade at a suspected Viet Cong combatant. The grenade exploded close to Kerry himself and one of its tiny fragments hit him. There was no enemy fire, a requirement for receiving a Purple Heart. And the tiny piece of shrapnel in his arm was removed with tweezers followed by small band aid that covered the area. Not bad for wounding oneself! But he worked the system and received the award.

The second Purple Heart came after Kerry had mandated psychological operations rather than carrying out his orders to destroy a Viet Cong village. His supposedly heroic leadership resulted in his own comrades suffering an attack when they should have been attacking. He received another minor wound on this occasion after claiming that "blood [was] running down the deck of his boat," an account later vociferously denied by some of the men who experienced the incident.

Purple Heart number three resulted from his account of another poor use of hand grenades, not a mine explosion as claimed by Kerry in the casualty report he created. Attempting to destroy a cache of rice that had been captured from the Viet Cong, he and one of his men tossed grenades at the rice, quickly realized they were too close to their target, and dove for cover. According to the man who participated in the effort and who described the event as "hilarious," bits of rice hit Kerry in the buttocks. A wound worthy of receiving a Purple Heart? Of course not! But when Kerry reported that the wound in his buttocks came from a mine explosion while he was heroically chasing enemy combatants, he



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on January 1, 2013

successfully worked the system again and gained the award — and a Bronze Star to boot. With three Purple Hearts, he presented himself to superiors and was sent home.

In their book, O'Neill and Corsi claim, "Kerry's Silver Star would never have been awarded had his actions been reviewed through normal channels." Taking credit for the efforts of other Swift Boat crews during one incident, Kerry claims that his courage and daring led to beaching his boat, surprising and routing "a score of enemy soldiers," capturing their weapons, and pursuing enemy combatants. But, according to several who were there, it was men from another boat who accomplished these deeds. Kerry arrived after the action had occurred, shot a fleeing Viet Cong soldier in the back, wrote up his own version of the incident, and won the high honor as a result. None of the men who actually carried out the mission received an equivalent Silver Star.

Soon after Kerry arrived back in the United States, he affiliated with the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW). Appearing in faitgues before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee led by Arkansas Democrat J. William Fulbright, he sported ribbons depicting the medals he'd won and recounted a litany of "war crimes" committed in Vietnam by American forces. Of his fellow service personnel, he claimed:

They told stories at times they had personally raped, cut off ears, cut off heads, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and turned up the power, cut off limbs, blown up bodies, randomly shot at civilians, razed villages in a fashion reminiscent of Ghengis Khan, shot cattle and dogs for fun, poisoned food stocks, and generally ravaged the countryside.

These crimes, he said, were carried out on "a day-to-day basis with the full awareness of officers at all levels of command." He even admitted on a *Meet the Press* interview a few days before his Senate testimony that he, too, had "committed the same kinds of atrocities." He therefore indicted all of the men in the field, all the officers above them, and himself. Kerry's brazen condemnation of the American effort against the communist-led forces of North Vietnam occurred on April 22, 1971. He repeated the same condemnations on other occasions. While fellow Americans were dying in the rice paddies and jungles of that faraway country, Kerry painted them as the worst of war criminals. What he stated, of course, was a total fabrication, something he admitted in a May 2004 appearance on *Meet the Press* when he said the charges he'd previously listed "were the words of an angry young man."

Kerry didn't just condemn his fellow servicemen, he told the Fulbright Committee that went to Paris to meet with Madame Nguyen Thi Binh, a high-ranking member of the Viet Cong. He later urged President Nixon to accept Madame Binh's proposal to end the war and return U.S. POWs if she got her way. Any American citizen who negotiates with officials of another government — especially one with whom America is at war — has broken the law and should be prosecuted. Kerry was not prosecuted. Instead, he was given front-page adulation in the *Daily World*, the communist newspaper here in America. He then reportedly proceeded to throw his medals away during a highly publicized anti-war demonstration in Washington. Later, he said he threw away the ribbons, not the medals. And he displays those medals he once rejected in his Senate office in the nation's capital.

In 1984, when John Kerry was facing a serious challenge for an open U.S. Senate seat from a Massachusetts businessman, his conduct became a matter of interest for The John Birch Society. He claimed during his campaign that "all decent Americans reject" the Society's positions. This writer, as a Society spokesman, emphatically challenged that statement at a packed press conference called by the organization. Appearing alongside me, retired Major General George S. Patton, the son of the famed World War II general, asked to speak. His carefully chosen condemnation of Kerry included his belief that Kerry's anti-war activities "probably caused some of my guys to die" because the enemy had been



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on January 1, 2013

energized by hearing what Kerry offered. Patton, who commanded American forces during the combat, added: "There is no soap that can wash that blood off his hands."

There is plenty more about John Kerry's past that should exclude him from being considered for any high government post. His short term of service in Vietnam is hardly worthy of the word "valor." But a committed leftist and a member of the liberal Establishment (Kerry is both) gets a pass from Mr. Obama and our nation's left-leaning mass media. In the process, our nation is not well served.

John F. McManus is president of The John Birch Society and publisher of The New American. He can be reached at jmcmanus@jbs.org.



Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative,
non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



Subscribe

What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.