

Joseph Galloway

November 13, 1941 – August 18, 2021

It is great sadness that we learned this week of the passing of Joe Galloway.

Well before VVA's inception in January 1978—when a small group of Vietnam veteran activists came to Washington, D.C., to address the lack of recognition and appreciation for our service—Joe Galloway was our champion, using his exceptional journalistic skills to record the unabashed truths of our service and homecoming, persisting, in the face of a divided nation and a weary public all too ready to forget about our unpopular war and those of us who had served in Vietnam.

Probably no war correspondent, other than Ernie Pyle, has devoted his entire life to telling the life story of the ordinary soldier. He was in the trenches with us in Vietnam, and he has been with us ever since. With compassion, wit, and determination, he has devoted his life and immense literary and journalistic talents to telling our story, the story of us at war and the story of our return.

In November 1965, as a civilian reporter for UPI, Joe Galloway was witness to the first major engagement of the Vietnam War, the bloody and vicious Battle of the Ia Drang Valley. Along with the 450 men of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, under the command of then-Lt. Col. Harold Moore, Joe Galloway was dropped by helicopter into a small clearing in the Ia Drang Valley, when a 2,000-man North Vietnamese Army regiment attacked. The battle for Landing Zone X-Ray endured nearly three days. In the fugue of battle, Galloway carried water, tended to the wounded, and took up arms to defend the fallen. Just 25 years old, Joe Galloway vowed that he would tell the world of the heroism of those who had served and those who had made the ultimate sacrifice.

He kept his promise, and in 1992, with Lt. Gen. Harold Moore, he authored *We Were Soldiers Once and Young*, telling of the amazing valor of the fighting men of the First Cav. This ode to the American fighting man was later the basis for Director Randall Lewis's film of the same name.

In 1995, thirty years after the Battle of Ia Drang Valley, Joe Galloway received the Bronze Star with V device for his heroism in rescuing a severely wounded soldier under fire, joining Ernest Hemingway as the only other civilian journalist to have received this decoration.

Joe Galloway returned to Vietnam for three more tours, covering the fall of Cambodia and South Vietnam in 1975. He later covered our war in the Persian Gulf, embedding with the Army's 24th Mech Infantry Division. At 65, Joe Galloway completed his last tour as a war correspondent in Mosul, Iraq, in 2006.

In 1999, we recognized Joe Galloway with the VVA President's Award for Excellence in the Arts. His contribution to the history of our war continues—whether recording our stories for the Vietnam War 50th Anniversary Commemoration Project or serving as advisor for Ken Burns' documentary on the Vietnam War, Joe Galloway has ensured that the story of our service and

sacrifice is told with compassion and humor, and reverence and honor for those we left behind.

Joe Galloway stood with us in the mire of Southeast Asia, reporting the truth; he was our champion during the darkest hours of our homecoming, when our service was denigrated and Hollywood and the media were quick to demonize Vietnam veterans, all too often portraying us as baby killers gone postal; and he has been telling our story ever since. Whether at *The Wall* on Memorial Day with the families of the fallen, or with the Gold Star children of Sons and Daughters in Touch, Joe's devotion to Vietnam veterans and their widows and orphans has never wavered.

Vietnam Veterans of America's founding principle is "Never Again Shall One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another." As an organization, we have worked hard to ensure that future generations of veterans return home to the embrace of a grateful nation, and that the American people learn once and for all to separate the war from the warrior.

We are eternally grateful to Joe Galloway for his moral courage in supporting those of us who served in uniform, and for his devotion to telling the story of a generation's valor and patriotism without bias or prejudice, at a time when few others were interested in our service and sacrifice.

Rest in Peace, Joe