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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2004

If The Media Did Its Job

by Michael in New York on [8/25/2004 02:22:00 PM](#)

If the media was doing its job, this is how the Swift Boat Veterans For Truth story would have been covered from the very beginning.

"A group called "Swift Boat Veterans For Truth" has begun running ads in battleground states this week. The ads make extreme, unfounded charges about John Kerry's military service. A group of Vietnam veterans, most of them never served with John Kerry and they have no documents to back up what they say.

"A main charge? That John Kerry's Bronze Star for rescuing a crewmember while under fire was a lie and that there was no enemy fire. One of their main organizers signed an affidavit saying John Kerry didn't deserve that Bronze Star. However, he recently recanted and told the Boston Globe that it was wrong of him to sign that affidavit. The next day, the campaign said he had signed another affidavit but was unavailable for comment.

"Other details of the group call into question their facts as well. Their website lists soldiers who served with John Kerry and claims they don't support his run for President. At least two of the people listed say that's a lie and that their repeated requests to have their names removed from the website and the campaign have been ignored. Another main organizer who argues Kerry shouldn't have received the Bronze Star and wasn't under enemy fire also has come into question. Why? Because he also received a Bronze Star for bravery under enemy fire -- *for the very same military action*. He now claims not to have known why he received that Bronze Star some 30 years ago -- a claim that would be scoffed at by most any veteran of any war who can describe in vivid detail every action that led to their receiving a medal. Repair notes for the boat John Kerry served on also noted new bullet holes after returning from the incident.

"Furthermore, the application for his Bronze Star was signed by another member of this group -- and that application explicitly cites his action under enemy fire. The only witness to the enemy fire it notes is another veteran, not John Kerry. There's still more: *another* member of this group was part of a Navy task force that reported on the incident at the time. It too detailed enemy fire from both shores of the river during the incident in which mines exploded, entire crews of some boats were injured, John Kerry was injured and pulled a fellow crewmember out of the water. In other words, these veterans accepted the glory of receiving Bronze Stars and other praise for the very same incident described in the very same way, they signed applications for those medals making the same claims they now say are in dispute, they served on military panels that filed reports describing these events and they remained silent for more than 30 years. If they lied then, why should anyone believe them now?

"As recently as 1996, a number of the members of this tiny group had praised John Kerry for his service in Vietnam and supported his reelection to the Senate. Others have praised John Kerry in the past as not only a veteran who did his duty but as one of the best and bravest of the Swift Boat leaders.

"So why are they suddenly recanting 30 years of praise and singing a different tune? Well, two of the veterans received harsh criticism in an acclaimed, best-selling book about John Kerry called "Tour of Duty" by Douglas Brinkley. The criticism didn't come from Kerry, but they may blame him anyway. Furthermore, all the veterans readily admit their real beef with John Kerry isn't his service in Vietnam -- after all, they've been praising him about it for the past 30 years. No, their real beef is that he came home and criticized the war and they felt it was wrong of him to do so.

JOHN'S PHOTOS

**HOT OFF THE WIRE****Eschaton**

Monday Night Thread - I wonder if Peter will do something stupid on Heroes tonight.
 17 minutes ago

Daily Kos

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Think Progress

Senate Should Ignore Nutty Glenn Beck Conspiracy Theories And Appoint Harold Koh - Our guest blogger is Henry Fernandez, a Senior Fellow at the Center For American Progress Action Fund. As ThinkProgress recently noted, a small number of ...
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HuffPost Politics

ZP Heller: Why Dr. King Would Break the Silence on Afghanistan - We must invest in our own economic recovery and in fixing Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis.
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