A Reason for Being
The Life of Pioneering War Photographer Dickey Chapelle

By Richard Curney

On November 9, 1965, Black October began. The U.S. Marines launched an operation anywhere in South Vietnam. The operation con- tinued through the Vietnam War. Embellished with the Marine was a photographer, a rare instance of a woman photog- rapher who covered the Vietnam War and the general area of American forces. The name was Dickey Chapelle. She was on her fourth trip to Vietnam. An adventurously conflicted photographer and writer, Chapelle had launched her career covering stories with the Marines from the Santa Fe since 1955. In the following two decades she documented war, victories, and tragedies throughout the world, all the while facing and overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles against female war correspondents.

On the second day of Black October, a heavy mortar explosion went off as the Marines worked their way to a river, leaving a man trapped with a grenade. A mortar round tore into the area, injuring several Marines. One fragment tore across Dickey Chapelle’s neck, severing a carotid artery. Last two words given to a chaplain, as Chapelle reportedly whispered, “I guess this was bound to happen.”

She died within minutes. She was 47 years old, the first female Amer- ican war correspondent to be killed in action and one of the most significant war photographers of her generation, male or female. Dickey Chapelle had been a rare female presence in the military where women were war correspondents, and left behind treasured images that helped us see, without compromise, the face of war.

She was a rare bird. She had credentials. She had a photographic eye. She was adventurous. She had a photographic eye. She was adventurous. She had a photographic eye. She was adventurous.

Born George Louise Chapelle in 1918 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, she was a deeply experienced conflict photographer and writer. Chapelle was asked to leave the National Geographic Society in 1965 when she submitted a freelance story to LIFE magazine. But her credentials were approved, and she continued to cover the Vietnam War.

The first female war correspondent to be killed in action, she was 47 years old. She was a rare bird. She had credentials. She had a photographic eye. She was adventurous.

In 1918, at the age of 16, she ac- cepted a scholarship to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technol- ogy to study aeronautical engineers. She was hired by a man who shared her passion for airplanes and aviation. She began to take aerial photography classes with him, and her interest in the mechanics of aviation grew.

In 1918, at the age of 16, she ac- cepted a scholarship to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technol- ogy to study aeronautical engineers. She was hired by a man who shared her passion for airplanes and aviation. She began to take aerial photography classes with him, and her interest in the mechanics of aviation grew.

In 1918, at the age of 16, she ac- cepted a scholarship to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technol- ogy to study aeronautical engineers. She was hired by a man who shared her passion for airplanes and aviation. She began to take aerial photography classes with him, and her interest in the mechanics of aviation grew.

In 1918, at the age of 16, she ac- cepted a scholarship to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technol- ogy to study aeronautical engineers. She was hired by a man who shared her passion for airplanes and aviation. She began to take aerial photography classes with him, and her interest in the mechanics of aviation grew.

In 1918, at the age of 16, she ac- cepted a scholarship to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technol- ogy to study aeronautical engineers. She was hired by a man who shared her passion for airplanes and aviation. She began to take aerial photography classes with him, and her interest in the mechanics of aviation grew.

In 1918, at the age of 16, she ac- cepted a scholarship to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technol- ogy to study aeronautical engineers. She was hired by a man who shared her passion for airplanes and aviation. She began to take aerial photography classes with him, and her interest in the mechanics of aviation grew.

In 1918, at the age of 16, she ac- cepted a scholarship to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technol- ogy to study aeronautical engineers. She was hired by a man who shared her passion for airplanes and aviation. She began to take aerial photography classes with him, and her interest in the mechanics of aviation grew.

In 1918, at the age of 16, she ac- cepted a scholarship to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technol- ogy to study aeronautical engineers. She was hired by a man who shared her passion for airplanes and aviation. She began to take aerial photography classes with him, and her interest in the mechanics of aviation grew.

In 1918, at the age of 16, she ac- cepted a scholarship to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technol- ogy to study aeronautical engineers. She was hired by a man who shared her passion for airplanes and aviation. She began to take aerial photography classes with him, and her interest in the mechanics of aviation grew.

In 1918, at the age of 16, she ac- cepted a scholarship to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technol- ogy to study aeronautical engineers. She was hired by a man who shared her passion for airplanes and aviation. She began to take aerial photography classes with him, and her interest in the mechanics of aviation grew.

In 1918, at the age of 16, she ac- cepted a scholarship to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technol- ogy to study aeronautical engineers. She was hired by a man who shared her passion for airplanes and aviation. She began to take aerial photography classes with him, and her interest in the mechanics of aviation grew.

In 1918, at the age of 16, she ac- cepted a scholarship to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technol- ogy to study aeronautical engineers. She was hired by a man who shared her passion for airplanes and aviation. She began to take aerial photography classes with him, and her interest in the mechanics of aviation grew.

In 1918, at the age of 16, she ac- cepted a scholarship to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technol- ogy to study aeronautical engineers. She was hired by a man who shared her passion for airplanes and aviation. She began to take aerial photography classes with him, and her interest in the mechanics of aviation grew.

In 1918, at the age of 16, she ac- cepted a scholarship to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technol- ogy to study aeronautical engineers. She was hired by a man who shared her passion for airplanes and aviation. She began to take aerial photography classes with him, and her interest in the mechanics of aviation grew.

In 1918, at the age of 16, she ac- cepted a scholarship to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technol- ogy to study aeronautical engineers. She was hired by a man who shared her passion for airplanes and aviation. She began to take aerial photography classes with him, and her interest in the mechanics of aviation grew.

In 1918, at the age of 16, she ac- cepted a scholarship to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technol- ogy to study aeronautical engineers. She was hired by a man who shared her passion for airplanes and aviation. She began to take aerial photography classes with him, and her interest in the mechanics of aviation grew.

In 1918, at the age of 16, she ac- cepted a scholarship to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technol- ogy to study aeronautical engineers. She was hired by a man who shared her passion for airplanes and aviation. She began to take aerial photography classes with him, and her interest in the mechanics of aviation grew.

In 1918, at the age of 16, she ac- cepted a scholarship to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technol- ogy to study aeronautical engineers. She was hired by a man who shared her passion for airplanes and aviation. She began to take aerial photography classes with him, and her interest in the mechanics of aviation grew.
Chapelle was once told that "war was no place for a woman." She agreed. "But," she said, "it's no place for a man, either."

AFTER THE WAR

Chapelle embarked on wide-ranging travels with her husband on behalf of several post-war relief agencies, documenting the rebuilding of much of the world after the carnage of the Second World War. Their photos and reporting of humanitarian efforts in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East appeared in National Geographic. But their marriage was fraying, complicated by the long separations of war and Tony Chapelle's serial infidelities. They divorced in 1955.

Post-divorce, Dickey found herself with the old itch to take her camera "where the pictures are," as she put it, and she renewed her military press credentials.

Over the next 20 years she documented the Algerian revolution, the Cuban revolution (where she was among the first correspondents to photograph Fidel Castro), and the 1956 Hungarian uprising, where she was arrested, interrogated, and...
Chapelle first went to Vietnam in 1963 when the American public was still being reassured that our military involvement was strictly in an advisory capacity. When she captured the image of a Marine with a machine gun at the ready in a helicopter doorway, later published in National Geographic, it put to the lie the official version that U.S. forces in Vietnam were non-combatant "advisers."

Chapelle received the Overseas Press Club’s George Polk Award in 1962 for her Vietnam War photos and coverage, and for the non-biased image of the door gunner. She was the first woman to receive the award. She was named "Honorary Marine." When asked to imagine a combat photographer, many envision a man looking as weary and sweat-stained as the troops he is embedded with. Few visualize a woman in that role, mainly because women were long locked out of combat journalism. These traditional gender attitudes held sway for many years, at one point reflected in a question posed to Dickey Chapelle in the midst of a military operation: "What's a woman doing out here?" A Marine commander on Iwo Jima voiced the same idea when he spotted Chapelle briefly after the landing and shouted, "Get that woman the hell off the beach!"

The prejudice prevailed for years, declaring that a war correspondent was a role no woman could or should involve herself with. It took women like Dickey Chapelle to defy the stereotype, both by inserting herself into the heart of the action no matter the danger, as well as by finding and recording the humanity that persists in the midst of war's chaos and confusion.

"Dickey Chapelle was intense and dynamic, five feet tall, never without her trademark pearl earrings and cat-eye glasses under an Australian-style bush hat. She reportedly could out-shout a drill sergeant, and was a close friend of General W. Wayne peppers, an artist, sculptor, and Marine Vietnam veteran renowned for creating the National Native Americans Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., received the VVA Excellence in the Arts Award. Additionally, Laurel Schaefer-Bozoucoff, Miss America 1972, was presented with the President’s Award for Entertaining the Troops in Vietnam.

The convention’s final official act was the crowning of the new Board and Officers, performed by Meeting Planner Wes Guidry and myself, providing a grand conclusion to the four-day Convention. VVA bestowed several key honors, including the President’s Award for Supporting America’s Veterans to Evan Williams Bourbon for its American-Made Heroes program, and the 2023 Senate to America Award to U-Haul International for its long-standing support of VVA.

For nearly 25 years, the D.O.V.E. Fund has provided humanitarian assistance to civilians in Vietnam. "Helping Vietnam, one job at a time," builds and upgrades schools to provide scholarships, medical and dental assistance, and builds safer houses, clean water and improved sanitation to remote villages in Vietnam. Your donation will help us in being relief to veterans, Agent Orange victims and the visually impaired.

The D.O.V.E. Fund is a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization. Donations are tax deductible.

Call Today 1-800-211-9263

**FREE SILVER! CALL NOW!**

As a special thank you for your order, we will send you a BRILLIANT NEW 5G COMBAT ANTI-SMOKING SILVER AMERICAN EAGLE, hand signed by legendary retired U.S. War Hero Shadrack Denton Everett, exclusively FREE! **LIMITED EDITION**

**AMERICA’S MOST TRUSTED SOURCE FOR PRECIOUS METALS**

I am selecting National as the exclusive supplier of my signature coin. National is a trusted distributor of gold, silver and their precious metals with customers all over North America and Europe. Additionally only distributors government-backed, legal tender American gold.

Call Today 1-800-211-9263