

Arnie's Army of One

By my cousin, Lin Maine

"John McCain was not a war hero. I like people who were not captured."

"That's [the Presidential Medal of Freedom] the highest award you can get as a civilian. It's the equivalent of the Congressional Medal of Honor, but [the] civilian version, it's actually much better because everyone [who] gets the Congressional Medal of Honor, they're soldiers. They're either in very bad shape because they've been hit so many times by bullets or they're dead."

"Look, I don't want any wounded guys in this [Bastille Day] parade. I don't want them, it doesn't look good to me. Why do you bring people like that here? No one wants to see that, the wounded."

"Veterans are losers and suckers. Why would they do it?"

- Donald Trump

My husband, Arnie, was a Vietnam Veteran who retired from the Air Force after 25 years of service. I lost him, in part because of Agent Orange, ten years ago. He was not a loser, he was not a sucker. Why did he do it? Now that's a fair question. He did it because he loved his country. He did it because he felt it was his duty.

Not every one of my generation felt that way.

During the Vietnam war, I had friends who enlisted, friends who were drafted, friends who went to Canada, friends who went to jail. I had friends who received deferments of various kinds, and friends who went underground.

Why did they make these decisions? I don't know, but I never criticized their decisions or them. My friends were in a tight spot due to the draft. As a woman, I was exempt from the draft in the '60's. Who was I to criticize anyone else? What gave me the right?

Oh, I protested. I protested the government, the war machine, the bombings, the napalm, the draft. But I never protested the soldiers. They were only doing the job they were asked to do.

After I lost Arnie it has been very difficult to not pass judgement on those whom chose not to go to Vietnam. I have friends who have made a lot of money in Canada after moving there to avoid the draft. I have friends who became successful in this country in part because of having earned college degrees obtained by staying home on college deferments instead of going overseas. Yet my husband, who chose only to serve his country, is gone.

It hurts.

But I have kept my mouth shut. As Arnie told me many times, he served to preserve the rights of all Americans, those who served and those who did not. He did not pass judgement on other's decisions. He did not feel he had that right. So I honored Arnie by keeping my feelings to myself.

But now comes a man of my generation, Donald Trump, who did not serve, who received a 'bone spur' deferment to avoid Vietnam, who feels it's his right to question a soldier's oath? To mock those that served? To dishonor the disabled? What gives him the right? How dare he!

Yet roughly half of the country thinks this guy's fit to serve as our Commander-in-Chief.

So now I'm not keeping my mouth shut. I will pass judgement on those that vote for Donald Trump this November. Particularly those that have not served. If you vote for Trump, please unfriend me on Facebook. Lose my telephone number and e-mail. Forget we ever knew each other.

You see, if Trump get's elected this November, those that voted for him will be the suckers and losers.

And the rest of us will pay the price.

That's all I'm sayin'

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