

Dickey Chapelle under Fire: Photographs of the First Female War Correspondent Killed in Action

John Garofolo

Wisconsin Historical Society Press (October 2015)

Hardcover \$25.00 (166pp)

978-0-87020-718-1

A fitting tribute to a fearless female war photographer who covered Cuba, Vietnam, Hungary, Algeria, and other hot spots.

Even if an amazing war photograph becomes iconic, little thought is given to the person risking life and limb behind the lens. *Dickey Chapelle Under Fire: Photographs by the First American Female War Correspondent Killed in Action*, by John Garofolo, pulls one photographer into the limelight she so much deserves.

Chapelle went where many male peers were afraid to go, and often for a lot less money. As a war correspondent, she waded through rivers in Vietnam, documented the fallout of World War II's Iwo Jima and Okinawa battles, was imprisoned in Hungary, followed Fidel Castro and his compatriots into revolution, and was smuggled into Algeria by rebels.

She continually pushed through gender stereotypes, asking editors and military officials to grant her access to the most dangerous front lines. Through it all, Chapelle wore cat-eye glasses and pearl earrings, and had an insatiable urge to bear witness to the inhumanity and humanity of war. She blazed a trail to garner respect for women in a traditionally male field, right up until she was fatally wounded when a marine patrol triggered an explosion in Vietnam.

More than just a collection of war photographs, *Dickey Chapelle Under Fire* pays tribute to Chapelle's life and work. Garofolo pulls from Chapelle's autobiography as well as other sources to provide a short narrative of her successes and obstacles in covering relief work or following medical teams. For example, in the "Bayonet Borders" chapter, he prefaces the dozen wartime photos with a story of how Chapelle smuggled penicillin into Austria and was subsequently imprisoned. Chapelle smartly dropped her camera before her arrest, according to Garofolo, to avoid also being tried as a suspected spy.

Such stories round out the picture of Chapelle behind the lens as she was capturing some incredible images that are cataloged in this collection. Published on the 50th anniversary of her death, *Dickey Chapelle Under Fire* is a fitting memorial to one woman's courage to show "how much life exists where death hovers," as war correspondent Jackie Spinner writes in the touching foreword.

AMANDA MCCORQUODALE (Fall 2015)

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