

filed Mylai

From last of three columns on Lt. William Calley, by Charles McCabe:

We are faced with the choice of dropping war altogether, since it no longer can truly serve as an instrument of national policy, and is certainly not doing so in Asia. Or, if wars continue to be recognized, to be declared, to be waged, we must acknowledge that free-fire zones, the destruction of civilian life, devastation of property, and the obscenity of body counts are essential weapons. Humanity, in these kinds of wars, must be ruled off bounds. Chivalry and honor are encumbrances, where victory cannot be had.

Just when this strange new idea was being worked out painfully by the Fort Benning jurors, their Commander-in-Chief jerked the rug and intervened ineptly in the painful process of national soul-searching.

Instead of keeping our mind on perhaps the greatest moral reassessment of our history, Mr. Nixon firmly reminded us that he is running for re-election, and that this datum is more important than the integrity of the military justice system which shone so brightly in that drab Georgia courtroom. The President made it clear that he was going to have the last word. He indicated that word would not be welcomed by the Calley jurors.

.....