

Pulitzer Prize winner defends free press



ROSEBURG (AP) — David Hume Kennerly took his cameras pretty much wherever he wanted when he was covering the Vietnam War, a freedom he says journalists must struggle to preserve.

"If the journalist wants to go out and get blown away, that's his business," the 45-year-old Pulitzer Prize winner said in an interview with *The News-Review* during a visit to his hometown of Roseburg.

The job also is made tougher by the sheer competition among the media, Kennerly said.

"Vietnam was more spread out, with fewer people covering the story," Kennerly said. "Nowadays, if there is a war a thousand people show up, and there is more press than soldiers."

Kennerly said there must be a compromise between the military's efforts to have total control of the media and the total freedom journalists demand.

Journalists also should be ready to cope with battleground emergencies that may require giving up the role of observer, Kennerly said. He remembers being criticized for bandaging wounded soldiers before taking pictures of them.

"It's a human thing," Kennerly said. "I would do what I had to do to save a human life. Fortunately, situations like that don't arise very often."

Kennerly's photographs of the war and the race riots in the United States are some of the most memorable and powerful of the 1960s. He covered assignments for United Press International and *Time* magazine, earning top awards and professional respect in his 20s.

Kennerly won the Pulitzer Prize for feature photography in 1972 at age 25 for a portfolio of photos that showed the absolute devastation of a battlefield in South Vietnam.

At 27, Kennerly was only the third civilian to be appointed personal photographer to a U.S. president. He demanded, and received, unlimited access to then-President Gerald Ford.

He said he remembers first wanting to become a photojournalist as a child in Roseburg when he saw a newspaper photographer covering a fire.

"Here was this guy crossing police lines, going to exciting events," Kennerly said. "After all, what kid doesn't like police cars and fire trucks?"

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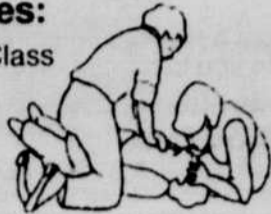
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