

FACT SHEET: Military record of John Sidney McCain III

Both McCain III's father and grandfather were Admirals in the United States Navy. His father Admiral John S. "Junior" McCain was commander of U.S. forces in Europe - later commander of American forces in Vietnam while McCain III was being held prisoner of war. His grandfather John S. McCain, Sr. commanded naval aviation at the Battle of Okinawa in 1945. McCain III finished near the bottom of his graduating class in 1958.

McCain III lost five U.S. Navy aircraft

- 1 - Student pilot McCain III lost jet number one in 1958 when he plunged into Corpus Christi Bay while practicing landings.
- 2 - Pilot McCain III lost another plane two years later while he was deployed in the Mediterranean. "Flying too low over the Irbid Peninsula, he took out some power lines which led to a spate of newspaper stories in which he was predictably identified as the son of an admiral.
- 3 - Pilot McCain III lost number three in 1965 when he was returning from flying a Navy trainer solo to Philadelphia for an Army-Navy football game. McCain III radioed, "I've got a flameout" and ejected at one thousand feet. The plane crashed to the ground and McCain III floated to a deserted beach.
- 4 - Combat pilot McCain III lost his fourth on July 29, 1967, soon after he was assigned to the USS Forrestal as an A-4 Skyhawk combat pilot. While waiting his turn for takeoff, an accidentally fired rocket slammed into McCain Jr's. plane. He escaped from the burning aircraft, but the explosions that followed killed 134 sailors, destroyed at least 20 aircraft, and threatened to sink the ship.
- 5 - Combat pilot McCain III lost a fifth plane three months later (Oct. 26, 1967) during his 23rd mission over North Vietnam when he failed to avoid a surface-to-air missile. McCain III ejected from the plane breaking both arms and a leg in the process and subsequently parachuted into Truc Bach Lake near Hanoi. After being pulled from the lake by the North Vietnamese, McCain III was bayoneted in his left foot and shoulder and struck by a rifle butt. He was then transported to the Hoa Lo Prison, also known as the Hanoi Hilton.

1973 New York Daily News labeled POW McCain III a "PW Songbird"

On McCain III's fourth day of being denied medical treatment, slapped, and threatened with death by the communist (they were demanding military information in exchange for medical treatment), McCain III broke and told his interrogator, "O.K., I'll give you military information if you will take me to the hospital." U.S. News and World Report, May 14, 1973 article written by former POW John McCain.

It was then that the communist learned that McCain III's father was Admiral John S. McCain, the soon-to-be commander of all U.S. Forces in the Pacific. The Vietnamese rushed McCain III to Gai Lam military hospital (U.S. government documents), a medical facility normally unavailable for U.S. POWs.

By Nov. 9, 1967 (U.S. government documents) Hanoi press was quoting McCain III describing his mission including the number of aircraft in his flight, information about rescue ships, and the order of which U.S. attacks would take place.

While in still in North Vietnam's military hospital, McCain III gave an interview to prominent French television reporter Francois Chalais for a series titled Life in Hanoi. Chalais' interview with McCain III was aired in Europe.

Vietnamese doctors operated on McCain's leg in early December, 1967.

Six weeks after he was shot down, McCain was taken from the hospital and delivered to a U.S. POW camp.

In May of 1968, McCain III allowed himself to be interviewed by two North Vietnamese generals at separate times." May 14, 1973 article written by former POW John McCain

In August 1968, other POWs learned for the first time that John McCain III had been taken prisoner.

On June 5, 1969, the *New York Daily News* reported in a article headlined **Reds Say PW Songbird Is Pilot Son of Admiral**, "... Hanoi has aired a broadcast in which the pilot son of United States Commander in the Pacific, Adm. John McCain, purportedly admits to having bombed civilian targets in North Vietnam and praises medical treatment he has received since being taken prisoner..." The *Washington Post* explained McCain III's broadcast: "The English-Language broadcast beamed at South Vietnam was one of a series using American prisoners. It was in response to a plea by Defense Secretary Melvin S. Laird, May 19, that North Vietnam treat prisoners according to the humanitarian standards set forth by the Geneva Convention."

In 1970, McCain III agreed to an interview with Dr. Fernando Barral, a Spanish psychiatrist who was living in Cuba at the time.

The meeting between Barral and McCain III (which was photographed by the Vietnamese) took place away from the prison at the office of the Committee for Foreign Cultural Relations in Hanoi (declassified government document). During the meeting, POW McCain sipped coffee and ate oranges and cakes with the Cuban.

While talking with Barral, McCain III further seriously violated the military Code of Conduct by failing to evade answering questions "to the utmost of his ability" when he, according government documents, helped Barral by answering questions in Spanish, a language McCain had learned in school. The interview was published in the in January 1970.

McCain III was released from North Vietnam March 15, 1973

In 1993, during one of his many trips back to Hanoi, McCain asked the Vietnamese not to make public any records they hold pertaining to returned U.S. POWs. McCain III claims, that while a POW, he tried to kill himself.

McCain III was awarded "medals for valor" equal to nearly a medal-and-a-half for each hour he spent in combat

For 23 combat missions (an estimated 20 hours over enemy territory), the U.S. Navy awarded McCain III, the son of famous admirals, a Silver Star, a Legion of Merit for Valor, a Distinguished Flying Cross, three Bronze Stars, two Commendation medals plus two Purple Hearts and a dozen service medals.

"McCain had roughly 20 hours in combat," explains Bill Bell, a veteran of Vietnam and former chief of the U.S. Office for POW/MIA Affairs -- the first official U.S. representative in Vietnam since the 1973 fall of Saigon.

"Since McCain got 28 medals," Bell continues, "that equals to about a medal-and-a-half for each hour he spent in combat. There were infantry guys -- grunts on the ground -- who had more than 7,000 hours in combat and I can tell you that there were times and situations where I'm sure a prison cell would have looked pretty good to them by comparison. The question really is how many guys got that number of medals for not being shot down."

For years, McCain has been an unchecked master at manipulating an overly friendly and biased news media. The former POW turned Congressman, turned U.S. Senator, has managed to gloss over his failures as a pilot and his collaborations with the enemy to become America's POW-hero presidential candidate.