

## **Uncle Sam Wants Me. Chapter One. First Awareness Of Viet Nam War.**

**I read the newspaper (sports section first, then the front page) and watched the evening news a lot as a child. My paternal grandfather Edwin Carnal and my dad Donn Carnal both read and watched the news regularly and I looked up to them with great admiration. So, I often sat by their sides, in their respective homes and watched the evening news. I asked questions. Sometimes they shushed me so they could get the full story and sometimes they offered a brief explanation.**

**On June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1963 when I was thirteen and had just finished eighth grade, I was watching the six o'clock news with my dad when they showed a clip of a Vietnamese Buddhist monk walking into a public square in his traditional robe with a can in one hand. No one seemed to be paying him much mind. He calmly sat down cross legged and proceeded to pour the contents of the can over his head and body. He then lit a match immolating himself. He maintained his position without any outward sign of distress as the flames engulfed his whole body, until he slowly toppled over dead. I was too stunned to ask any questions out loud. But my adolescent brain was churning. The newscaster was explaining that the monk was protesting the American supported war in his country.**

**My dad and granddad Carnal were devote Democrats and loved our President John F. Kennedy. So, I loved him too. But I had no idea where Viet Nam was or that we had “advisors” stationed there in support of the South Viet Nameese military. But the image of that monk’s courageous protest still remains seared into my brain to this day. And from that time forward I made it a point to watch for anything in the paper or on the TV news that referred to the Viet Nam war.**

**I slowly learned that most Americans supported our involvement in Viet Nam due to the then popular “domino theory”. That theory was based on the concept that if South Viet Nam fell to the Chinese supported Communist North Viet Nam, then the surrounding countries would soon follow suit and become Communist, then the countries next to those would fall, until the red tide was lapping at the shores of the U. S. of A. That did not sound good.**

**During the next two years I became aware of dissenting voices that did not buy into that theory and thought that the United States had no business interfering with the destiny of a tiny country half way around the world. By that point our supposedly non-combatant advisors had been joined by full**

**on combat troops fighting in the jungles of Viet Nam. And the number of those troops was growing exponentially.**