

John Sack, 74, Correspondent Who Reported From Battlefields

By CHRISTOPHER LEHMANN-HAUPT

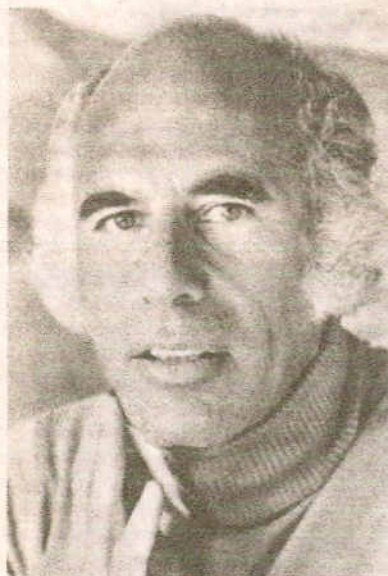
John Sack, a pioneer of New Journalism who was best known for his reporting from the battlefields of Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Yugoslavia and Afghanistan, died Saturday in San Francisco. He was 74.

The cause was complications of prostate cancer, according to an announcement from *Esquire* magazine, to which Mr. Sack contributed for 45 years.

While he employed new journalism's literary techniques, he was credited by critics with sticking to the facts. In "M" (New American Library, 1967), Mr. Sack followed an infantry company from its training at Fort Dix to battle action in Vietnam. Praised for its mix of compassion and objectivity, the book grew out of an *Esquire* cover article, "Oh My God! We Hit a Little Girl," which remains the longest article to appear in the magazine.

Some of his other books proved more controversial. While writing "Lieutenant Calley: His Own Story" (Viking, 1971), an account of how William H. Calley Jr. came to be convicted for massacring Vietnamese civilians in My Lai, Mr. Sack was indicted on federal charges involving his refusal to give evidence, but prosecutors dropped the case. For "An Eye for an Eye" (Basic, 1993), a report on what Mr. Sack described as the persecution of Germans by Polish Communist Jews in post-World War II internment camps, he was accused by critics of rushing into print prematurely in time for a report on the subject by the television program "60 Minutes."

Mr. Sack told his own story in "Fingerprint" (Random House, 1983), a "Tristram Shandy"-like autobiography filled with digressions. He was born in New York City



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John Sack in 1978.

on March 24, 1930, the son of John Jacob Sack, an accountant for the Davega sporting goods chain, and Tracey Rose Levy Sack.

A sister, Lois Edelstein, of Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., survives him.

After graduating from Harvard in 1951, he joined the Army and was a combat correspondent in Korea for Pacific Stars and Stripes. After his discharge he became a writer, producer and correspondent for CBS News.

In 1966 he left CBS to become *Esquire's* war correspondent in Vietnam. At various times in his life, he was also an editor for *Playboy* magazine, a producer for KCBS-TV in Los Angeles and a writer for the television show "That's Incredible."

Deaths

SACK—John, one of the founders of the new genre of literary journalism, died in San Francisco on March 27. The author of ten books and the numerous magazine articles, every major war fought by the U.S. from Korea to Afghanistan. Earlier in his career, he was a writer, producer, and special correspondent for CBS television news. He was a graduate of Harvard College. His principal residence was in Ketchikan, ID, where he was an avid skier and one-time ski instructor. For the past two years, he had been living in San Francisco. His last work was an article on his final illness and is scheduled to be published in the July issue of *Esquire*.