

WASHINGTON, D.C. (CPS) — "War crimes in Vietnam are not isolated actions but a way of life . . . (representing) the logical consequence of our war policies . . . Ask any Vietnam veteran."

So concluded former U.S. Army Captain and West Point graduate Robert Johnson. He

two air strikes a day whether or not there was any military reason.

It seems to have been standard operating procedure for air and artillery units to randomly dispose of any extra explosives on the countryside, populated or not. Hugh Scanlon of the 68th Assault Helicopter

witnesses to them and occasionally co-participants.

What emerges from this testimony is the veteran's belief that the U.S. has adopted terror as the cardinal element of our counter-insurgency.

Ultimately what is seen behind the "search and destroy" mission which

Veterans say My Lai may be farce in face of other atrocities

spoke for the National Veterans Inquiry into U.S. War Crimes at the close of their D.C. hearings.

In three days of testimony over 40 witnesses, most of them Indochina War veterans, gave raw description to the human reality often clouded in the style of military speech. Terms like "pacification" and "free-fire zone" elude emotional recognition.

Account after account, frequently of a confessional nature, related the regular random murder of civilians and the routineness of torture. Stories ranged from the employment of electric shock equipment to the use of python snakes.

What emerges is a pattern of brutality almost surrealistic for its level of inhumanity; a pattern into which the events of My Lai fit comfortably.

The testimony suggests the Calley trial is a farce, another element in the national illusion created to deal with the War. If he is sentenced, commented one veteran, then so should be 20 to 30 per cent of all ex-GIs.

For the American soldier in Vietnam, all Vietnamese are potential executioners and therefore immediate enemies. What is chronicled in the veterans' accounts is a complete disregard and contempt for Vietnamese life.

This disregard is sanctioned at the highest level. In fact, claim the veterans, the policy makers who conceived of the search and destroy mission, the practice of saturation bombing and the yardstick of the body count demand it.

Testimony was regularly given of civilian massacres. William Marbound, a field radio mechanic, related the killing of 24 women near Bong Son in July, 1968.

Ed Barbour, a medic, testified to the killing of approximately 27 civilians when a U.S. tank fired into a peaceful village meeting at Au Lo in August, 1968.

Kenneth Campbell, a Marine Lance-Corporal, testified to the "unprovoked killing" of approximately 20 civilians in a random artillery strike.

The systematic use of saturation bombing over highly populated areas was reported by Gary Thamer of the 173rd Airborne and Larry Rottman of the 25th Infantry Division. In a 1967 F-4 bomb raid of Lan Vei village, at least 150 civilians were estimated as killed or seriously wounded by former Captain Don Engel who visited the site.

Former First Lieutenant Bro Adams testified that he was under orders to have at least

Unit testifies to having witnessed door gunners drop C.S. cannisters on villages "for laughs."

In interrogation there were no limits, reported men who themselves had beaten and otherwise mistreated prisoners.

Peter Martinsen recounted the systematic use of electrical torture. The wires of his groups field phone were commonly attached to the sensitive parts of suspects' bodies. They were then treated to what one unit called "The Bell Telephone Hour."

Former Sgt. Edward Murphy testified to the unleashing of scout dogs on reticent suspects. Nathan Hale, a specialist involved with military intelligence, described the frequent drowning of prisoners, who for fun had been tied to the splash boards of armored personnel carriers as they rumbled through the rice paddies.

Steve Noetzel, attached to the special forces, testified to the use of snakes in order to terrorize suspects and the placing of detainees in coffin-shaped barbed wire cages. The slightest movement resulted in the puncturing and gouging of their flesh. The captives in the cages were often sprayed with bug attractor.

In numerous cases the suspects and detainees were little more than randomly collected civilians, veterans said.

According to the testimony, brutality became a way of life. In one company it was reported that nearly 20 per cent of the men at one time or another wore the pickled ears of dead Vietnamese around their necks.

In another unit the soldiers were issued extra insignia patches for the understood purpose of jabbing them into enemy corpses.

Testimony was given involving missions into Laos and Cambodia long before the publicized invasion. One occasion a unit's information officer testified to the alteration of battle coordinates in the unit's records the day after the operation.

Testimony was also given regarding the massive use of defoliants and chemical warfare. Reports were given that defoliation now marks about ten per cent of the Vietnamese countryside.

Persistently members of the press and audience confronted the veterans as to why they did not report these crimes to their commanding officers. Invariably the reply indicated that the officers were already aware of the practices, often

systematically yet randomly obliterates villages, behind the response of "saturation bombing" to minimal provocation, behind the "harrassment and interdiction fire" which often amounts to random murder in order "to keep the enemy off-balance," behind the intelligence campaigns like Operation Phoenix which equate to a covert program of assassination, and behind the "pacification" program which amounts to a system of concentration camps, is the aim of destroying a society.

In military language this process is termed, "Forced Draft Urbanization." As described by Professor Chomsky, its goal is to eliminate the guerilla's nourishing sea in the countryside by eliminating the countryside.

According to Chomsky's figures nearly seven million Vietnamese have been directly affected by this program of brutal resettlement.

Throughout the hearing the veterans documented that the overriding concern of our military presence was with the body count.

There were numerous references to a system of rewards that offered beer and leave passes for confirmed kills. With this as the final definition of our presence, its tendency towards atrocity seems inherent.

Help wanted

Student Activities urgently needs volunteers for the following projects:

Co-ed student group to give Christmas party for men's ward (15-20 men) at Regional Center (State Hospital). Call Zoya Zeman, Student Volunteer Office 472-2484.

Three tutors for Juvenile Court Probation Tutoring. Call Chuck Rucker, County-City Bldg., 475-5611 or Bill Janike, County-City Bldg., 475-5520.

Volunteer Rock Band for

teenagers at Macy, Nebr. (Omaha Indian Reservation). Help them raise funds for a recreation center. Call Steve Strasser 472-2589, or Zoya Zeman 472-2484.

Office workers at Nebraskans for Peace. Needed Thursdays 9-10:30, 1-5; Tuesdays 3:30-5. Call Nick Meinhardt 475-1400.

Volunteers to work with Indian youngsters on Monday nights (transportation needed to help pick up the kids). Call Karen Swihart, YWCA, 432-2802.

ASUN action . . .

Kurtenbach resolution

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resolution he wanted to introduce which dealt with the Rozman case in far greater detail than the statement which was approved.

"... if Rozman is not rehired through just procedures by the Regents such action will have a disturbing adverse effect on the University community and the structure of the University itself," Kurtenbach's proposed resolution read.

"If Rozman is arbitrarily not rehired, an injustice will have been committed by the Regents. Such action would compromise the basic freedoms and responsibilities of the University," his statement continued. "Consequently, AAUP censorship, litigation, demonstrations, civil disobedience, and-or violence could understandably happen in the face of such an arbitrary and unjust act."

Senators seemed to agree with the gist of Kurtenbach's statement, but decided to hold off discussion and possible action on it until next week's meeting.

Kurtenbach said he was so disturbed about the Rozman

case that he was considering staging a hunger strike outside the Chancellor's office in the Administration Building if the Regents do not act properly in the Rozman case.

Questions for junior women

In order to have a complete record on all junior women for the purposes of recommendations, available scholarships, and academic honors, Helen Snyder, Associate Dean of Student Affairs is requesting that every junior woman pick up a questionnaire in 309 Administration Bldg. and return it immediately.

All Junior women who have not filled out such a form should do so as soon as possible, she said.

Faculty hearing

The faculty hearing on the Stephen Rozman case is to be held before the Academic Privilege and Tenure Committee, rather than the entire Faculty Senate as reported Wednesday.



New brew for the new breed