

Veteran of Special Forces Denounces U.S. Policy

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 9 — A veteran of 18 months in Vietnam with the Army Special Forces has written a denunciation of United States policy, saying of his duty there, "The whole thing was a lie."

The veteran, former M. Sgt. Donald Duncan, 34 years old, quit the Army last September after 10 years' service, six of them in the elite Special Forces. Men in the forces, which was favored by President Kennedy, wear the green beret as a mark of distinction.

In an interview, Mr. Duncan discussed charges that he made in a magazine article, to be published Friday, that most of the people in South Vietnam sympathize with and support the Vietcong.

He said that when his outfit first went to Vietnam, the men masqueraded as civilians and trained and armed certain ethnic groups for the Central Intelligence Agency, in violation of the Geneva accords.

Infiltrators Cited

He also charged that the Special Forces had trained infiltrators into Laos and North Vietnam, while the United States was complaining of Communist infiltration into South Vietnam.

Among many other sweeping allegations, he asserted that Special Forces troops were taught torture methods and that they were urged, indirectly, to arrange for the killing of Vietcong prisoners by South Vietnamese troops.

The charges were contained in an article in Ramparts, a magazine for Roman Catholic laymen, published in Menlo Park, Calif. Recently the magazine has sought to broaden its appeal.

Mr. Duncan said he had taken a job with Ramparts as military editor. The magazine has scheduled a news conference for him in Washington tomorrow, after which he plans to travel across the country to make speeches under its auspices.

The magazine's interview with Senator Frank Church, in which

the Idaho Democrat called for major changes in United States policy in Asia, received widespread attention last year.

The Department of Defense, after studying Mr. Duncan's charges, issued the following statement:

"Apparently Mr. Duncan has written an article expressing his views on his military service. We have no comment."

The Pentagon confirmed that Mr. Duncan had received an honorable discharge and that he had not been disciplined while in uniform. There appeared to be nothing in his official record to indicate cause for vindictive grievance.

Qualified sources could recall no other instance in which a veteran of combat in Vietnam had so sharply and publicly assailed United States intervention there.

Mr. Duncan stressed in an interview that he was an anti-Communist and a Roman Catholic. He said that he had been eager to serve in Special Forces after the abortive Hungarian revolt in 1956 because his stepfather was of Hungarian origin.

He identified his stepfather as Henry Gerber of Los Angeles, retired director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He said Mitzi Gaynor, the actress, was his stepsister. Mr. Duncan, a native of Toronto, said he was a naturalized citizen and that his late father had been a prominent electronic engineer in Toronto.

Mr. Duncan emphasized that he was "not out to do a hatchet job on the Special Forces" and expressed high regard for its officers and men as individuals.

He said that he had helped to brief Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara when he visited Special Forces headquarters in Nhatrang, South Vietnam, last summer.

He also called attention to his work in preparing a report, "Project Delta," and showed a letter of commendation from Brig. Gen. William E. Dupuy, assistant chief of staff for operations in Vietnam.

Mr. Duncan said he had vol-

unteered for Project Delta, "wherein specially selected men in Special Forces were to train and organize small teams to be infiltrated into Laos."

In the magazine article he described his training in Special Forces as follows:

"Initially, training was aimed at having United States teams organize guerrilla movements in foreign countries. Emphasis was placed on the fact that guerrillas can't take prisoners. We were continuously told, 'You don't have to kill them yourself—let your indigenous counterpart do that.'"

"In a course entitled, 'Countermeasures to Hostile Interrogation,' we were taught NKVD (Soviet) methods of torture to extract information. It became obvious that the title was only camouflage for teaching us 'other' more sophisticated methods . . ."

"When we asked directly if we were being told to use these methods the answer was, 'We can't tell you that. The mothers of America wouldn't approve.'"

"This sarcastic hypocrisy was greeted with laughs. Our own military teaches these and even worse things to American soldiers. They then condemn the Vietcong guerrillas for supposedly doing those very things. I was later to witness first hand the practice of turning prisoners over to ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) for 'interrogation' and the atrocities which ensued."

Of Project Delta, he wrote:

"The primary purpose of dropping these teams into Laos was to find the Ho Chi Minh trail and gather information on traffic, troops, weapons, etc. This was purely a reconnaissance intelligence mission, but the possibility of forming guerrilla bases later was considered."

"There was some talk of going into North Vietnam, but not by Project Delta. Another outfit, Special Operations Group (SOG) was already doing just that. SOG was a combined forces effort. The C.I.A., Air Force (U.S.), Navy, Army, and detached Special Forces personnel were all in on the act."

Discounts Security Breach

Asked if his references to these projects did not constitute breaches of security, Mr. Duncan replied that Radio Hanoi had reported on the Laotian infiltration effort. Only six out of 40 men involved returned, he said, the rest being killed or captured.

As for the S.O.G. project to get troops into North Vietnam, he said, "Hanoi knows that happened. It's time the American people knew it, too."

Mr. Duncan asserted that, at the last minute, the Americans in the Laotian infiltration venture were held back and that the South Vietnamese were ordered to go in alone.

This was done, he said, to avoid the possibility of having Americans captured, "possible embarrassment to President Johnson during an election campaign."

in Vietnam as a 'Lie'

Mr. Duncan said that while doing research as an area specialist in Vietnam he learned that "in province after province" small Vietcong teams grew to divisional strength.

He said that "one of the first axioms one learns about unconventional warfare is that no insurgent or guerrilla movement can endure without the support of the people."

Referring to the Vietcong growth, he said:

"Such growth is not only impossible without popular support, it actually requires an overwhelming mandate. 'I was always told that the

vast majority of the people of South Vietnam were opposed to the Vietcong. When I questioned this contradiction, I was always told that the people only helped the Vietcong through fear.

"Supposedly the Vietcong held the people in the grip of terror by assassination and torture. This argument was also against doctrine. Special Forces are taught that reliable support can be gained only through friendship and trust."

Little by little, he said, "I had to accept the fact that Communist or not, the vast majority of the people were pro-Vietcong and anti-Saigon."