

War Veteran Says He Killed '10 or 15' In Vietnam Village

The transcript of interview
will be found on Page 16.

A 22-year-old disabled Army veteran said yesterday that he killed "10 or 15" men, women and children during the alleged massacre in March, 1968, in the South Vietnamese village of Songmy.

"Why did I do it?" asked the veteran, Paul Meadlo of Terre Haute, Ind., as he was interviewed on the Columbia Broadcasting System radio network. "Because I felt like I was ordered to do it, and it seemed like that—at the time I felt like I was doing the right thing, because, like I said, I lost buddies.

"I lost a damn good buddy, Bobby Wilson, and it was on my conscience. It was on. So after I done it, I felt good, but later on that day, it gettin' to me."

Mr. Meadlo said he had been ordered to kill residents of the village by First Lieut. William L. Calley Jr. of Miami and that Staff Sgt. David Mitchell of St. Francisville,

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Fla., was in charge of his squad.

Lieutenant Calley and Sergeant Mitchell have been charged by the Army with assault with intent to commit murder in connection with the case, and Lieutenant Calley was ordered yesterday to stand general court-martial.

Mr. Meadlo reported that on the day after the alleged massacre, he stepped on a land mine and subsequently lost a foot.

"I feel cheated," he said in an interview with Mike Wallace, a news correspondent, "because the V.A. [Veterans Administration] cut my disability like they did, and they say that my stump is well-healed, well-padded, without tenderness.

"Well, it's well-healed, but it's a long way from being well-padded. And without tenderness? It hurts all the time. I got to work eight hours a day up on my foot, and at the end of the day, I can't hardly stand on it. But I gotta work because I gotta make a living. And the V.A. don't give me enough money to live on as it is."

Mr. Meadlo, who said he had a wife and two children—a boy 2½ and a girl 1½—said he had been in the first wave to reach the village by helicopters.

'We Huddled Them Up.'

He said that after one villager—"an old man"—had been shot, about 40 to 45 people were gathered in the center of the village. There were men, women, children and babies, he said. He continued:

"And we huddled them up. We made them squat down, and Lieutenant Calley came over and said 'You know what to do with them, don't you.' And I said yes. So I took it for granted that he just wanted us to watch them. And he left, and came back about 10 or 15 minutes later, and said, 'How come you ain't killed them yet.' And I told them that 'I didn't think you wanted us to kill them, that you just wanted us to guard them.' He said, 'no I want them dead. So—'"

Mr. Wallace said, "He told this to all of you, or to you particularly?"

Mr. Meadlo replied: "Well, I was facing him. So, but the other three, four guys heard it and so he stepped back about 10, 15 feet, and he started shooting. I poured about four clips into the group."

67 Shots Estimated

Mr. Meadlo said that he was firing an M-16 rifle, and under questioning he estimated that he had fired 67 shots.

"Well," he said, "I fired them

on automatic, so you can't—you just spray the area on them and so you can't know how many you killed 'cause they were going fast. So I might have killed 10 or 15 of them."

After the initial shooting, Mr. Meadlo said, other individuals—about seven or eight—were gathered into a hut and a hand grenade was tossed among them.

Mr. Meadlo estimated that 370 persons were killed in the village during the day. He said that the company commander, Capt. Ernest Medina, was "right there" but did not put a stop to the shootings.

Vietnamese civilians have told American reporters that 567 residents of the village were killed. One American who said he was an eyewitness has put the number at 100. The South Vietnamese Government has declared that no massacre was committed in Songmy by American troops on March 16, 1968.

Mr. Meadlo said that more than 70 villagers were taken to the edge of a ditch, pushed over, and shot with automatic fire, then single shots, "so that we could save our ammo."

Mr. Wallace asked, "How do you shoot babies?"

"I don't know," Mr. Meadlo replied. "It's just one of them things."

Describing the shootings at one point, he said:

"And the mothers was hugging their children, and—but they kept right on firing. Well, we kept right on firing. They was waving their arms and begging."

Asked how he felt during the shooting, he said, "I just seemed like it was the natural

thing to do at the time. I don't know. It just—I was getting relieved from what I'd seen earlier over there."

Asked to elaborate, he said, "By buddies getting killed or wounded or—we weren't getting no satisfaction from it, so what it really was, it was mostly revenge."

Mr. Meadlo said that now he dreams about the village.

"I see the women and children in my sleep," he said. "Some nights, I can't even sleep. I just lay there thinking about it."

In another interview, with Seymour M. Hersh of the Dispatch News Service, Mr. Meadlo said that his company had been in the field for 40 days without relief before the incident in the village and had suffered casualties from mines.

In the interview Mr. Meadlo, a factory worker, was described as the son of an Indiana coalmine worker who married his high-school sweetheart and began to raise a family before he was drafted. He said that he had been in Vietnam for four months at the time of the alleged massacre.

The report said: "As Meadlo was waiting to be evacuated [after he was wounded], other men in the company reported, he told Calley that this [injury] was his (Meadlo's) punishment for what he had done the day before, and warned, according to onlookers, that Calley would have his day of judgment, too. Asked about this, Meadlo said he could not remember."

Mr. Meadlo was described as the son of Mrs. Myrtle Meadlo of New Goshen Ind., who was quoted as saying:

"I sent them a good boy and they made him a murderer."