

His Role in Alleged Massacre of Civilians at Songmy

gathering up again. We started moving out, and we had a few gooks that was in—as we started moving out, we had gooks in front of us that was taking point, you know.

Q. Uh-huh. A.—and as we walked—

Q. Taking point. You mean out in front? To take any fire that might come.

Stepped on Land Mine

A. Right. And so we started walking across that field. And so later on that day, they picked them up, and gooks we had, and I reckon they took them to Chu Lai or some camp that they was questioning them, so I don't know what they done with them. So we set up (indistinct) the rest of the night, and the next morning we started leaving, leaving the perimeter, and I stepped on a land mine next day, next morning.

Q. And you came back to the United States. A. I came back to the United States, and lost a foot out of it.

Q. You feel —

A. I feel cheated because the V.A. cut my disability like the 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 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.

Q. Veterans Administration. A. Right. So—

Q. Did you feel any sense of retribution to yourself the day after? A. Well, I felt that I was punished for what I'd done, the next morning. Later on in that day, I felt like I was being punished.

Q. Why did you do it? A. Why did I do it? 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. So after I done it, I felt good, but later on that day, it was gettin' to me.

Q. You're married? A. Right.

Q. Children? A. Two.

Q. How old? A. The boy is two and a half, and the little girl is a year and a half.

Q. Obviously, the question comes to my mind . . . the father of two little kids like that . . . how can he shoot babies? A. I didn't have the little girl. I just had the little boy at the time.

Q. Uh-huh. How do you shoot babies? A. I don't know. It's just one of them things.

Q. How many people would you imagine were killed that day? A. I'd say about 370.

Q. How do you arrive at that figure? A. Just looking.

Q. You saw, you think, that many people, and you yourself were responsible for how many of them? A. I couldn't say.

Q. Twenty-five? Fifty? A. I couldn't say . . . just too many.

Q. And how many men did

the actual shooting? A. Well, I really couldn't say that, either. There was other . . . there was another platoon in there and . . . but I just couldn't say how many.

'Just Sitting, Squatting'

Q. But these civilians were lined up and shot? They weren't killed by cross-fire? A. They weren't lined up . . . they [were] just pushed in a ravine or just sitting, squatting . . . and shot.

Q. What did these civilians—particularly the women and children, the old men—what did they do? What did they say to you? A. They weren't much saying to them. They [were] just being pushed and they were doing what they was told to do.

Q. They weren't begging or saying, "No . . . no," or—A. Right, They was begging and saying, "No, no." 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 . . .

Q. Was that your most vivid memory of what you saw? A. Right.

Q. And nothing went through your mind or heart? A. Many a times . . . many a times . . .

Q. While you were doing it? A. Not while I was doing it. 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.

'It Was . . . Mostly Revenge'

Q. What do you mean? A.

Well, I was getting . . . like the . . . my buddies getting killed or wounded or—we weren't getting no satisfaction from it, so what it really was, it was just mostly revenge.

Q. You call the Vietnamese "gooks?" A. Gooks.

Q. Are they people to you? Were they people to you?

A. Well, they were people. But it was just one of them words that we just picked up over there, you know. Just any word you pick up. That's what you call people, and that's what you been called.

Q. Obviously, the thought that goes through my mind—I spent some time over there, and I killed in the second war, and so forth. But the thought that goes through your mind is, we've raised such a dickens about what the Nazis did, or what the Japanese did, but particularly what the Nazis did in the second world war, the brutalization and so forth, you know. It's hard for a good many Americans to understand that young, capable, American boys could line up old men, women and children and babies and shoot them down in cold blood. How do you explain that?

A. I wouldn't know.

Q. Did you ever dream about all of this that went on in Pinkville? A. Yes, I did . . . and I still dream about it.

Q. What kind of dreams? A. I see the women and children in my sleep. Some days . . . some nights, I can't even sleep. I just lay there thinking about it.