

Army Investigating Death of a Villager In Mekong Incident

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SAIGON, South Vietnam Nov. 26 (Reuters)—A criminal investigation is under way into an alleged incident involving a United States soldier and the death of a Vietnamese in the Mekong Delta in June, a spokesman for the United States command said today.

He had been questioned about a report that a company of the United States Ninth Infantry Division had fired on an occupied village in the Delta for "target practice."

The report said the firing took place in June northwest of the division's base at Dongtam, 40 miles southwest of Saigon.

The spokesman said, "an investigation was held into an incident northwest of Dongtam in the same time period of June in which one person was killed and one person was involved."

"This original investigation was a military investigation and this has turned

into a criminal investigation," he said.

Other than identifying the dead person as Vietnamese and the other person as an American soldier, the spokesman would not comment further.

He did say, however, this was the only incident reported in the area.

Dongtam was evacuated by the Ninth Division after two of its brigades left South Vietnam in July and August as part of the United States troop withdrawals.