

Victims at My Lai Estimated at 500

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. Army officials investigating the alleged My Lai massacre have estimated between 450 and 500 people—most of them women, children and old men—were killed, Harpers magazine reports.

The May issue of the magazine said in an article released today investigators found the bodies in a ditch and buried in mass graves at three sites.

THE ARTICLE, written by Seymour M. Hersh, a free-lance writer who broke the story of the alleged massacre, quoted a number of soldiers who said they witnessed a massacre. Some said they participated in it.

The soldiers, members of C Company in the Americal Division during the alleged March 16, 1968, incident, were quoted as giving the following account:

SEEKS MY LAI TRIAL HALT

ALTUS, Okla. (AP) — The chairman of the powerful House Armed Services Committee told a crowd of 600 here last night he will attempt to stop the My Lai courts-martial.

"They're not going to get by with this," Rep. L. Mendel Rivers, D-S.C., said. "I had a little something to do with stopping the Green Beret business and I'm going to have something to do with stopping this."

"A woman came out of a hut with a baby in her arms and she was crying," said Herbert Carter. "She was crying because her little boy had been in front of their hut and . . . someone had killed the child by shooting it."

Carter said when the woman emerged one of the GIs "shot her with an M16 and she fell. When she fell, she dropped the baby."

HE SAID the soldier then "opened up on the baby with his M16" and killed the baby too.

After watching another woman shot, Carter recalled, "some enlisted man standing there said: 'Well, she'll be in

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the big rice paddy in the sky."

Michael Bernhardt described his company's operations at My Lai: "One: they were setting fire to the hootches and huts and waiting for people to come out and then shooting them. Two: they were going into the hootches and shooting them up. Three: they were gathering people in groups and shooting them.

"The whole thing was so deliberate. It was point-blank murder and I was standing there watching it. It kind of made me wonder if I could trust people anymore," he said.

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