

Army Medics Say G.I.'s Used Village In Target Practice

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Jan. 9 (UPI) — Two United States Army soldiers have told military investigators that American troops fired into a village for target practice last June and killed South Vietnamese civilians.

Allied sources identified the witnesses today as medics who watched a United States infantry company, about 200 men, take up positions behind an embankment and, on order, open fire with their M-16 automatic rifles.

The sources said it was not known how many civilians had been slain. American investigators have been unable to visit the site because the area is controlled by the Vietcong.

The village was reportedly near Dongtam, a base in the Mekong River delta 37 miles southwest of Saigon where the Ninth Infantry Division had its headquarters before the unit was withdrawn from the war zone last year.

The names of the two medics were not reported, but the men were said to have been interviewed in Hawaii by Army officials who acted after the incident was first disclosed by Representative Lionel Van Deerlin, Democrat of California.

Mr. Van Deerlin said in Washington last November that he had received second-hand information from two medics who said they had witnessed the shooting and killing of civilians by American troops.

"In brief," Mr. Van Deerlin said at the time, "it is a shocking report of a company commander of the Ninth Infantry Division who ordered his men to use village huts for target practice."

"When the occupants came streaming out of their huts, they were shot down, many in the same way as we are told the occupants of Songmy were," he said.

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