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## Defector Tells of Massacre by Enemy at Quangtri

Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Sept. 8—A defector from the North Vietnamese Army said today that his unit had gunned down civilian men, women and children and South Vietnamese soldiers without discrimination as they fled south from Quangtri City in late April and early May.

The defector, Le Xuan Thuy, 22-year-old private first class who had served as a radio operator in a battalion of the 324th North Vietnamese Division, was presented this morning at a formal press conference in the national press center here by officers of the South Vietnamese Army's political warfare department.

In what appeared to be a prepared statement, Private Thuy said that his unit had maintained an ambush position along Route 1 south of Quangtri for six days as other Communist troops assaulted and eventually captured the province capital.

"Our unit commander told us that those who moved southward were our enemy," Private Thuy said.

"All vehicles, civilian and military, were fired on by the North Vietnamese Communists," Private Thuy said, inexplicably referring to his former colleagues in the phrase the South Vietnamese Government most often uses.

He continued: "The people moving on the highway were of all social strata. They were all fired at because the North Vietnamese Communists considered them to be followers of the enemy. That is why they all had to be killed."

The ambush was widely reported as it was taking place, but some newsmen suggested that the civilians had been killed inadvertently because they had mingled with fleeing soldiers.

In response to a newsman's question today, Private Thuy

said: "The civilians and the military were sometimes separated, sometimes together. But all had to be destroyed by order of the North Vietnamese Communists because they were fleeing south toward the enemy."

In August a spokesman for the United States Department of State described the incident as "A deliberate North Vietnamese massacre of helpless civilians."

The State Department spokesman estimated that as many as 2,000 persons had been

killed. Independent newsmen estimated the dead at between 200 and 600. Private Thuy said that he could not offer a figure.

So far, 258 dead have been accounted for by South Vietnamese searching for remains in the area.

The comments by Private Thuy, who indicated that the main reason for his defection was his revulsion over the ambush, purportedly represented the first exposition of the North Vietnamese rationale concerning the civilian deaths.