

New Viet Bombing Accusation

Washington

A former Air Force officer has told the staff of a Senate armed services subcommittee that he participated in an attempt to bomb what was suspected to be a Viet Cong hospital in South Vietnam in 1969, it was disclosed yesterday.

The incident, if true, would be in violation of the Geneva Conventions and the U.S. armed forces' rules for conducting war.

Sources on the Senate armed services subcommittee headed by Senator Harold Hughes (Dem-Iowa), which last week revealed the secret bombing of Cambodia, said former Captain Gerald J. Greven had been extensively interviewed by members of the subcommittee staff.

In those interviews, Greven, 30, of Miami, Fla., reportedly told subcommittee staff members that the bombing took place in late March or early April, 1969 — about a month after the secret bombing of Cambodia began.

JOB

Greven, now a commercial airline pilot, told the staff members that target information about suspected Viet Cong activity was routinely provided and that his job, as a forward controller, was to fly over combat areas, locate targets, and call in air attacks, the sources said.

On the mission in question, he was said to have told the staffers that, fearing that the target supplied by intelligence officers might be an underground hospital, he radioed the attacking planes that it was a "suspected hospital or something like that."

The sources said Greven told the subcommittee staff that the planes made the

raid anyway and he was admonished for using the word hospital over the air.

Greven told the Associated Press yesterday that "hospitals were never left out of air strikes, only that the word hospital was not used."

He said hospitals were described as bunker complexes or supply areas.

TESTIMONY

The subcommittee sources said Hughes wanted Greven to testify before the subcommittee.

Greven's meeting with the panel staff was first reported yesterday by Seymour M. Hersh of the New York Times, who quoted Greven as saying in an interview:

"The intelligence guys would give you an idea of what the coordinates (of possible targets) were. They would say suspected bunkers, or suspected base camp or enemy base camp. In this case, they said hospital."

"I was suspicious. In my own mind I was questioning

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the legitimacy of doing something like this."

Asked for independent verification of his assertions, Greven provided the name of a fellow forward observer who is still in the service. That officer, reached by telephone at his base, confirmed that he had flown with Greven in Vietnam but said that as an officer on active duty, he was "not at liberty" to discuss the allegations.

CONSCIENCE

"This nation's going to have a guilty conscience about this war for a long time," the officer said. However he added that, to his knowledge, "all of the targets out there were cleared through the Vietnamese province chief — cleared by both military and civilians."

A New York Times check of newspaper files showed no previous charge of planned destruction of a Viet Cong hospital site during the war, although there is evidence that many hospitals were inadvertently destroyed by bombs or artillery shells.

The B-52 bombing of Bach Mai Hospital in Hanoi created a furor during raids last December on the areas of Hanoi and Haiphong. Pentagon officials, after initially denying any responsibility for the bombing, eventually acknowledged that "some limited accidental damage" had occurred. However, the Pentagon repeatedly maintained then that "our strikes have been targeted only at military targets."

"On paper," Greven said, "the controls looked pretty good, but when they were carried out it was pretty different. Over there you get a feeling that it doesn't do any good to say, 'Hey, this isn't right.' We were bombing villages, and the prevailing attitude was that these kind of things were going on. People wouldn't listen to you — they'd say, 'Well, that happens. It's war. The V.C. do this too.'"

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