

Lies and Cover-Ups In the Pentagon



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THE PENTAGON has now admitted falsifying reports to cover up the bombing of Cambodia before the 1970 invasion. Senate witnesses are prepared to testify, however, that both the bombing and the falsifying continued after the invasion.

The Pentagon has also admitted falsifying the casualty reports to cover up the deaths of 102 Americans in Cambodia and Laos on secret intelligence - gathering missions.

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IT HAS TAKEN the Pentagon more than two years to get around to admitting the truth about these missions. We reported on March 30, 1971, that "MACSOG teams," composed of U.S. special forces and South Vietnamese Rangers, have made several raids into both countries. The secret messages referred to the Cambodian raids by the code name 'Salem House' and identified the Laos incursions as 'Prairie Fire' . . .

"A secret summary of the MACSOG casualties alone, dated March 6, 1970, listed 77 Americans killed and 37 missing in Laos," our story continued. "Scores more were lost on clandestine missions after March, but we have been unable to get the secret figures."

We were assailed by the Pentagon for this report at the same time that the Jus-

tice Department conducted a grand jury investigation to discover our Pentagon sources. Now the Pentagon has admitted its spokesman lied, and we told the truth.

The Senate Armed Services Committee, meanwhile, will receive sworn testimony that a hush - hush "special operations group" directed the reconnaissance missions into Cambodia, Laos and North Vietnam.

SOG operated out of an old office building in Saigon. The entrance was marked by a skull topped with a green beret. The group, which was run by the Central Intelligence Agency, maintained three "command and control" centers in Vietnam.

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SENATE WITNESSES will also tell about the secret operations in Cambodia and Laos of the "Blackbirds," as the air squadrons were known because of their lack of identifying markings. The National Security Council, headed by Henry Kissinger, ordered the secrecy cloak on the raids for diplomatic reasons.

Senate sources tell us that upcoming testimony will also focus on the "Phantom Command" which operated outside of normal military channels. These same sources report that bases are now being set up in Thailand and the Philippines to train Cambodian forces under U.S. auspices.