

Transcribed from tape

(Mylai?)

What happened in the hamlet of My Ly in the village of Song My in March of last year? That's the area where an American Army unit is alleged to have massacred a large number of South Vietnamese civilians. The number varies from about a hundred to nearly six hundred. But South Vietnam's defense minister, who looked into the matter on orders from President Thieu, says it didn't happen, that only about twenty civilians were killed there and that was because the Vietcong forced them to remain in the village when it was under an American air and artillery attack. The province chief of the area said much the same thing earlier this week, although he put the casualty figure at about three hundred. But a different story has been told by several GI's who say they were in the village of Song My on that fateful day in March and saw other GI's gun down unarmed civilians. Some of the villagers who escaped told correspondents of seeing men, women and children lined up and shot by American soldiers.

The United States Army, continuing its own investigation, apparently has concluded that there is ground for some legal action. A lieutenant and a sergeant are under arrest, the lieutenant now formally charged with the premeditated murder of approximately a hundred Vietnamese civilians, the sergeant with intent to murder some thirty civilians. The Army is questioning about two dozen other men in connection with the case but they won't be named unless formal charges are brought against them. If charges are brought, even GI's no longer in the service could be court-martialed under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. The Army's General Counsel explains that a provision of the Code covers former servicemen who committed crimes while in uniform, and, he emphasized, obeying unlawful orders to commit murder is no defense under military law.