



SOUTH VIETNAM, MARCH, 1968: Soldiers of the Americal Division waiting as an air strike, with napalm, was made against a village suspected of harboring Vietcong. Mem-

bers of the division are accused in alleged slayings of civilians in Mylai, part of village of Songmy. Divisional newsletter told of killing 128 of the enemy at the time.

Associated Press

Army Reported 128 Enemy Dead at Songmy

QUANGNGAI, South Vietnam, Nov. 25 (UPI)—An official United States Army publication distributed the day after the alleged massacre at Songmy reported 128 enemy killed there in an American attack supported by artillery and helicopters.

The newsletter of the United States Americal Division made no mention of civilian casualties and reported the attack as a mission against a Vietcong stronghold. It said:

"Jungle Warriors [the 11th Light Infantry Brigade] together with artillery and helicopter support hit the village of Mylai early yesterday [March 16, 1968] morning. Contacts throughout the morning and early afternoon resulted in 128 enemy killed, 13 suspects detained and 3 weapons captured."

Mylai is a hamlet in Songmy village.

No Names Mentioned

The newsletter did not mention names and made no reference to First. Lieut. William L. Calley Jr., the 26-year-old officer who has been charged with the murders of at least 109 civilians in the village. Lieutenant Calley, of Miami, is being held for a general court-martial at Fort Benning, Ga.

Another edition of the mimeographed, one-page newsletter said the attack on Songmy had been part of a larger mission known as Operation Muscatine.

It said six Vietcong were killed in the area on March 17 as troops from a task force known as Barker pushed through ricefields around Quangngai, eight miles from Songmy.

Two Battles Reported

The Aug. 1, 1968, edition of the Americal Division's weekly newspaper, The Southern Cross, said two battles had been fought near Songmy.

"Operation Muscatine involved some of the largest encounters with the Vietcong in the Warriors' fledgling history," it said. "Troops twice engaged a Vietcong battalion near the village of Mylai and killed a total of 196 enemy soldiers."

"When Task Force Barker was disbanded after 78 days, it had accounted for 401 of the 1,000-plus enemy killed in the six months of fighting in the Muscatine area."

"The past seven months have seen the Jungle Warriors hit the enemy hard and often, both in major battalion-sized operations and in the slow but steady attrition process of daily sweeps through his area."

Report by Stars and Stripes

An account of the attack on Mylai printed in the Pacific Stars and Stripes shortly after the incident also said that 128 enemy had been killed.

The military newspaper's article quoted Lieut. Col. Frank Barker, the task force com-

mander, as declaring that "the combat assault went off like clockwork," with two companies of soldiers landed in less than an hour.

"A company led by Capt. Ernest Medina killed 14 VC [Vietcong] minutes after landing," the report said. "The attack on the village accounted for 69 enemy killed, some of which were attributed to supporting artillery fire. A suspect told the interpreter that a large VC force had spent the night in the village."

The Stars and Stripes account, printed under a Chulai dateline, said that another platoon had landed on a beach south of the village and inflicted more casualties. The raid was described as the third within a few weeks on "a Vietcong stronghold known as 'Pinkville.'" There was no mention of civilian casualties.

'Pincer Movement' Cited

In a Page One article on March 17, 1968, The New York Times reported that two companies of the Americal Division had caught a North Vietnamese force the day before in a pincer movement, killing 128 enemy soldiers. The accounts in the Americal Division newsletter and Stars and Stripes mentioned only Vietcong.

The dispatch, citing information given by an American spokesman, reported that two

American soldiers had been killed and 10 wounded in day-long fighting six miles northeast of Quangnai. Neither the hamlet Mylai nor the village Songmy was mentioned in the report. The article went on:

"In the fighting near Quangnai, about 150 men of the Americal Division encountered the enemy force early yesterday. A second company from the same unit was dropped in by helicopter two miles to the northeast to provide a squeeze on the enemy troops."

Numerous Clashes in Area

"The United States soldiers were sweeping the area, where numerous clashes had been fought in the last year and a half, but which had been relatively quiet in recent months, with the exception of the Lunar New Year attack on the city of Quangnai itself."

"The operation is another American offensive to clear enemy pockets still threatening the cities."

"While the two companies of United States soldiers moved in on the enemy force from opposite sides, heavy artillery barrages and armed helicopters were called in to pound the North Vietnamese soldiers."

The report said it was not clear "how many of the enemy had been killed by the artillery and helicopter attacks, and how many were shot down by the American infantrymen."