

JUN 12 1970

EX-OFFICER TELLS OF SONGMY DATA

Says Intelligence Reports
to Troops Conflicted

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 11—A former Army intelligence officer has written in a magazine article that the American Army unit involved in the alleged Songmy massacre received conflicting intelligence information.

Jesse Frank Frosch, who was an Army intelligence lieutenant assigned to the advisory team in Quangngai province at the time of the Songmy incident in March, 1968, also says that the Songmy area was the scene of "a staggering slaughter of civilians" by troops of the first South Korean Marine Brigade in late 1967.

Mr. Frosch, whose article appears in the July issue of Playboy, is now a reporter in Atlanta for United Press International.

According to Mr. Frosch, Task Force Barker—the unit involved in the Songmy incident—was told by his intelligence unit that only the remnants of a devastated enemy battalion were in the area of Songmy, and the nearest of them were eight miles from the village.

But Mr. Frosch says Task Force Barker also received a report from a Central Intelligence Agency operative — "long on enthusiasm and energy but woefully short on judgment," according to Mr. Frosch — who put enemy strength in the Songmy area at up to 450 men.

South Korean Sweep

The former intelligence officer writes that, in 1967, the South Koreans reported they had killed more than 700 Vietcong troops in a sweep into the Songmy area.

Mr. Frosch recalls that a South Korean officer told him that the Koreans had encountered no enemy forces and had implied that the victims were civilians.

"The Koreans had committed the first Songmy massacre, he says, "and it left a legacy of hate for the incoming Americans of Task Force Barker."

Mr. Frosch says that when his unit received the report of Task Force Barker's Songmy operation, "We simply could not believe the count. There weren't 128 Vietcong troops in the village to be killed that day, and it would have been impossible for that many Vietcong to have been killed with so few weapons taken."

"Although there was speculation that civilians had gotten in the way, nobody made much of it," he continued. "The more accepted conclusion was that Task Force Barker had inflated its body count for good press coverage."

While the Pentagon refused to comment on Mr. Frosch's article, the report of the official Army inquiry into the Songmy incident put the strength of the enemy battalion at 200 to 250 and said that it had elements in the Songmy area.

The Army report said that two enemy companies were also in the region. These companies would normally number 50 or 60 men.