

Former Officers Testify

Dellum's War Crimes 'Hearing'

Washington

Five former Army officers—all West Point graduates—told yesterday how Americans callously abused South Vietnamese civilians and allowed the torture and murder of enemy prisoners.

A major and four captains testified before an unofficial committee chaired by Representative Ronald L. Dellums (Dem-Calif.) and sponsored by a dozen anti-war House members who want the Armed Services Committee to open a formal inquiry into alleged war crimes.

Former Army Captain Michael O'Meara of Alexandria, Va., charged there was a 'body count mania' during 1969 when he was in Viet-

nam. He said it resulted in field officers reporting inflated body counts of enemy dead to satisfy the quotas of division commanders.

Captain Greg Hayward, 28, Frederick, Md., a 1964 graduate at West Point, said there was a 'systematic effort to cover up' the killing of at least ten women and children in a mortar attack in a village south of Dau Tieng.

Although he complained that the platoon leader who called in the barrage had no reason to suspect Communist troops were in the village, Hayward said his report to the base camp of the First Battalion of the 27th Infantry was suppressed.

Former Captain Robert Bowie Johnson, 27, Annapo-

lis, Md., told the committee that he was present on two occasions when enemy prisoners were killed by South Vietnamese troops.

He added that the use of free fire zones, search and destroy missions, and bombing of the countryside eventually made it clear that "we are carrying war against the (South) Vietnamese themselves."

After the first three witnesses testified, Dellums said he was convinced the "highly credible" testimony showed the need for a "full scale inquiry into potential war

atrocities."

While most of the testimony dealt with unnamed persons, several witnesses elaborated on previously revealed incidents involving George S. Patton III, now a general.

Gordon Livingston, 32, a bearded former major who served as regimental surgeon for the 1st Armored Cavalry Regiment, told how Patton, then a colonel, ordered him to keep a wounded prisoner alive for questioning "and after that he could die."

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