

PRESS STATEMENT

by

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(On February 8, 1968, nineteen (19) women and children were murdered in Viet-Nam by members of 3rd Platoon, "B" Company, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry. The details are set forth in the first issue of SCANLAN'S Magazine. There is little I can add to that article.

I would like to emphasize that the murders of February 8, 1968 were not isolated incidents, nor was "B" Company composed of aberrant individuals. In the article I have described other murders that took place in Viet-Nam committed not only by "B" company but by other companies as well. Incidents similar to those I have described occur on a daily basis and differ one from the other only in terms of numbers killed.

Like all such murders, if reported at all, action is taken only if they become public. Unfortunately the only action taken is against individuals who are as much victims of the war as the people they have killed. Indicting three men here and four there will not stop the murders and serves only to absolve the United States Army and those who direct it of the blame, the place where it rightly belongs. Such indictments also inhibit others from coming forward to testify thereby hiding the magnitude of murder in Viet-Nam by the United States Army from the American public.

The murders of February 8, 1968 and those charged to Lt. Calley at My Lai will stop only when people in this country understand why they occur, and instead of pushing the blame on others are willing to accept their share of the responsibility for them, and only after our soldiers in Viet-Nam are given better reasons to die than those so far put forth.

Consistent with my belief that nothing is served by indicting individuals or embarrassing their families I have not used the names of the individuals involved in the murders of Feb. 8 or the others I have detailed in the article. The members of "B" company present that day are on the company roster and morning report. The exact location of the hamlet in which the murders occurred is in the Battalion operation order and after-action reports. The information is in the hands of the United States Army. I was contacted yesterday by the U.S. Army in the form of criminal investigators. (I invited them here today but they indicated a reluctance to attend.)

Had people been willing to listen to my story in September 1968 and the few others before and after me who tried to tell what was happening in Viet-Nam not only would many innocent Vietnamese civilians be alive today but any number of American soldiers would not now be facing courts-martial for the charge of murder. My motivation can be stated quite briefly: I want the murder of Vietnamese stopped and I want the military to stop putting Americans in the position of becoming murderers.