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Testimony of Mr. Paul D. Meadlo,  
, West Terre Haute,  
Indiana, taken at Holiday Inn, Terre  
Haute, Indiana, at 1715 to 1840 hours  
on 16 July 1969, by Colonel William  
V. Wilson, IG.

Q. Do you want to see my credentials?

A. No, that is all right. I have seen enough stuff  
on you for me. You have got me convinced.

Q. O. K. This investigation concerns the alleged  
destruction of a village in South Vietnam nicknamed Pink-  
ville which was approximately five or six miles north of  
Quang Ngai City. The incident allegedly occurred in March  
1968--

A. (Interposing) 16th.

Q. --during the time Co C, 1/20th, Task Force Barker,  
conducted search and destroy operations on the Batangan  
Peninsula, or just south of the peninsula. The investigation  
is official and it is being made at direction of the Chief  
of Staff of the Army. The investigation is privileged in  
the sense that my report will be made to the Chief of Staff  
of the Army. The substance thereof should not be discussed  
with others. It will carry a CONFIDENTIAL classification  
and the purpose of the investigation is to determine the  
facts relative to that particular operation. I'd like to  
place you under oath. Will you stand and raise your right  
hand?

(The witness was sworn.)

A. Please state your full name.  
Paul D. Meadlo, M-E-A-D-L-O.

Q. Occupation?

A. Gas station attendant.

Q. Home address?

A. , West Terre Haute.

Q. What was your serial number?

A. US 65 003 591.

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Q. What was your grade?

A. PFC.

Q. When were you discharged?

A. September 3d, I think it was. I am not accurate on that.

Q. '68?

A. Yes, I got out of the hospital in August and it was 1968 and I got my regular discharge papers in September, sir.

Q. Were you given a disability discharge?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. For what disability?

A. For what disability? My foot off.

Q. You lost your foot?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. What was the date that you lost this foot?

A. March 17th, 1968. It was the day after that village was wiped out.

Q. I want you to describe in as much detail as you can the events which occurred when C Co conducted search and destroy operations on the 16th of March.

A. We landed right next to the village.

Q. What village?

A. Pinkville, and we came down and we made a formation. We went in and we seen some people running in and out of the village, and as we started moving in there was a man out there in a hootch, like in the rice paddy, and they said, "Somebody is in there," and somebody said, "Kill him," so somebody killed him. I heard the man mumbling, begging for his life, and somebody said, "Kill him," so somebody up and shot him. We moved on in and we just moved on in and we just started wiping out the whole village. That is it. We burnt the village and killed all the people and just one mass slaughter, just like you do a bunch of cows, you know, just killed them all.

Q. Well, who was the man that shot this fellow in

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1 the hut?

2 A. I wouldn't know who that was.

3  
4 Q. Were you given a briefing the day before the  
5 operation?

6 A. Yes, we were. They said that the people were  
7 given word to move out of the village because they were  
8 suspected VC in the village, and they were given a week's  
9 notice, I think it was, to move out of the village because  
10 they knew we was coming in, so that's what happened. We  
11 went in and they suffered the consequences.

12  
13 Q. Who gave you this briefing?

14 A. It was SGT Mitchell, the head of my squad.

15  
16 Q. Did you get a briefing from CPT Medina?

17 A. Yes, we did. That's right.

18  
19 Q. What did he say?

20 A. I can't remember his exact words.

21  
22 Q. What impression did he leave?

23 A. What impression did he leave? Well, that we were  
24 supposed to move in and kill the people.

25  
26 Q. All of them?

27 A. All of them. I heard later on that day that we  
28 wasn't supposed to have killed the women and children, we  
29 was just supposed to kill the men.

30  
31 Q. When did you hear this?

32 A. Later on that evening when we were getting ready  
33 to make camp.

34  
35 Q. How did you get this word?

36 A. It was from my team leader who got it from the  
37 squad leader who was SGT Mitchell.

38  
39 Q. Who was your team leader?

40 A. He had a funny name. I can't remember it.

41  
42 Q. Like Grzesik?

43 A. Grzesik, that's it, Grzesik.

44  
45 Q. Did SGT Mitchell say, "Kill all the people in

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1 the village?

2 A. No, it was LT Calley.

3  
4 Q. So LT Calley also gave you a briefing?

5 A. Right, and LT Calley was the one, I believe,  
6 that said, "Kill that man in the hootch."

7  
8 Q. You sure of that?

9 A. I am not sure of anything. It has been so long  
10 ago. That is the day I wiped out of my mind.

11  
12 Q. What weapon were you armed with?

13 A. M-16.

14  
15 Q. Did you fire that weapon?

16 A. Yes, I did.

17  
18 Q. Did you fire it at individuals or area targets?

19 A. I killed individuals.

20  
21 Q. How were--let me say something here. (Pause) I  
22 am not going to pursue that question.

23 A. I do remember something else. We had about 45 to  
24 50 people in a circle, in a big circle right out in the  
25 field, and LT Calley came up and he says, "You know what do  
26 do with them, don't you," and I said, "No." He says--well,  
27 let me see. He said, "You know what to do with them," and  
28 I didn't quite understand what was meant. He walked away  
29 and pretty soon he came back and he said, "Well, why haven't  
30 you killed them yet?" I said, "I didn't know we was supposed  
31 to kill the people," or something like that. He told me,  
32 "Let's kill them," so we killed them.

33  
34 Q. Who killed them?

35 A. LT Calley opened up on the first and then I joined  
36 in.

37  
38 Q. Well--

39 A. (Interposing) Then we had--

40  
41 Q. (Interposing) Wait, before you say anything else.

42 A. O. K.

43  
44 Q. I want to go over something before you say anything  
45 else now, Meadlo. This is a formal investigation, as I said.

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1 Normally we give very standard warnings, the same type  
2 warnings given by police, courts and things like that.  
3 I haven't given you a warning because you are not subject  
4 to the Uniform Code of Military Justice. You are no longer  
5 in the military. It is my information that no U. S. ci-  
6 vilian court has jurisdiction over crimes committed in  
7 another country--

8 A. (Interposing) Um-hum.  
9

10 Q. --and as far as I know we have no extradition  
11 treaty with Vietnam if they want to prosecute. There was  
12 a test case about 15 years ago in the Supreme Court about  
13 an operation that took place in Italy. It involved a U. S.  
14 Army major and a SGT Toth and I think that the case was the  
15 Toth case. The outcome of that was that the Federal Govern-  
16 ment had no jurisdiction over crimes committed in a foreign  
17 country. Now on the basis of what you have said, and with-  
18 out a warning, your testimony cannot be held in evidence  
19 because you have incriminated yourself.

20 A. How did I do that by just following orders? Who  
21 am I to question orders when the rank is higher than me?  
22

23 Q. An execution--we get into other legal cases--an  
24 execution is not a legal order, but the main thing that I  
25 am telling you is this, that until you receive a warning  
26 which gives you exactly what your rights are your testimony  
27 cannot be used as evidence against you.

28 A. Um-hum.  
29

30 Q. And I don't have the authority to provide you with  
31 a military lawyer after this warning is given, but I feel I  
32 have got to give you this warning before we go any further  
33 and so I want you to pay attention to it.

34 A. I'd like to ask you a question. Can you really  
35 get me for anything like that or for killing people when I  
36 was just following orders?  
37

38 Q. I just said there is no civil court that can try  
39 you for a crime, if it is concluded to be a crime, in a  
40 foreign country. If you were in the military they would be  
41 the only ones that would have jurisdiction over personnel  
42 in that foreign country, but aside from that your statements  
43 so far would be thrown out of any court. Before I give you  
44 that warning I am going to call Washington because we have  
45 got to be right in this and you have to know your rights.

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(MEADLO)

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1 A. All right.

2 Q. So if you don't mind waiting around a few minutes--

3 A. All right.

4  
5  
6 Q. --we will take a recess for a few minutes.

7  
8 (Colonel Wilson left the room at 1740 hours and upon  
9 his return at 1800 hours the interrogation continued as  
10 follows.)

11  
12 Q. I remind you you are still under oath.

13 A. O. K.

14  
15 Q. Mr. Meadlo, you are advised that you are suspected  
16 of having committed a war crime, to wit: Wrongful destruction  
17 of a village and murder of Vietnamese civilians. Your con-  
18 stitutional rights are that you have a right to remain silent.  
19 Any statement you make may be used as evidence against you in  
20 a criminal trial. Do you desire to make any further state-  
21 ments?

22 A. No.

23  
24 Q. Do you desire to give any testimony?

25 A. Anything that you want to ask me I will give what  
26 I can give you and that's it.

27  
28 Q. Then you will consent to the questions and answer  
29 them if you desire?

30 A. If I can answer them I will answer them.

31  
32 Q. So you will give testimony?

33 A. Right.

34  
35 Q. How many people were rounded up in this group?

36 A. I'd say about 45 or 50.

37  
38 Q. Were these mixed sex?

39 A. Yes, they were.

40  
41 Q. What proportion were men?

42 A. What proportion were men? I'd say about one-third.

43  
44 Q. Was this in the village?

45 A. Yes, it was.

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(MEADLO)

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1 Q. You mentioned it was in a field before.

2 A. Well, the field was--you know, the village was  
3 going around like this here (indicating) and the field was  
4 right in the center.  
5

6 Q. You mean there was a clearing in the center of the  
7 village?

8 A. Right, there was a clearing in the center of the  
9 village.  
10

11 Q. And LT Calley rounded these people up?

12 A. No, that's what we gathered up as we went through  
13 the village and that is where we placed them after we rounded  
14 them up. That's where he said to place them at.  
15

16 Q. And LT Calley opened fire on these people?

17 A. I don't think I will answer that question.  
18

19 Q. Who else was with you at the time?

20 A. There was a man named Boyce, B-O-Y-C-E. He was  
21 the grenadier and I can't remember the rest of the names.  
22 I just can't remember them.  
23

24 Q. Were you working with your squad at that time or  
25 were you separated from your unit?

26 A. I was working with two other people in my squad.  
27 That was Boyce and a foreigner guy. I can't figure his name  
28 either. Names just don't stick with me.  
29

30 Q. If I gave you a roster do you think you could  
31 identify him?

32 A. Right.  
33

34 Q. (Colonel Wilson handed a roster to the witness.)  
35 That's by grade.

36 A. Um-hum. (Pause) I remember Dursi. Dursi, James  
37 Dursi. I mean he wasn't doing any firing whatsoever on the  
38 people. (Pause) Stanley was there, Harry Stanley. Simone,  
39 he was there, too, S-I-M-O-N-E.  
40

41 Q. Was Torres there?

42 A. Torres? I don't remember if he was there or not.  
43 I remember that kid that had a young face to him. I can't  
44 think of his name and I can't recognize his name on here  
45 even.

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Q. Was it Terry?  
A. Terry? It might have been him.

Q. Was it Bernhardt?  
A. No.

Q. Terry was a Mormon, you know.  
A. Yes.

Q. Was it Gruver?  
A. I don't remember if Trevino was there or not.  
Sledge was there.

Q. Who?  
A. S-L-E-D-G-E.

Q. Was Sledge there at the time this execution took place, or were all of these people there at that time?

A. I don't think I will answer that. I went to Wood's funeral, John Wood. I went to his funeral in Michigan after I got back. He got killed by a mine.

Q. Let me read you some testimony.  
A. O. K.

Q. (Colonel Wilson reading as follows.)

"Q. Was Medloe's wound a result of the platoon leader's misjudgment?

"A. I don't know. It--it was a result of a lot of people's misjudgment I think.

"Q. What do you mean by that?

"A. Well, what had happened is that Medloe was carrying the mine sweeper; I had him carrying it. And they were going up to Hill 85 and it was supposedly mined. And I had followed Medloe with the mine sweeper before, and he wasn't the most careful person in the world with a mine sweeper.

"Q. In other words, he shouldn't have been a mine sweeper, or he shouldn't have had that job?

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"A. Well, it wasn't the job of being a mine sweeper. It's just that somebody had to carry it in the meantime, and I had picked him to do it because he was a pretty strong boy. But, above that, I don't know whether it was a misjudgment or not. But if it was, Calley was taking an awful chance because he was right behind him."

A. He wasn't right behind me.

Q. He was not?

A. No, he wasn't.

Q. (Colonel Wilson reading as follows.)

"A. As a matter of fact, he had powder burns all over his face and his arms from the explosion."

A. That must have been from SGT Mitchell.

Q. No, that was Grzesik. Do you remember if you said anything to LT Calley after you were wounded?

A. I think I said something. I don't remember what it was. I don't know what it was. I was almost out of my head, I know that. I looked down and saw my foot was gone. That is when I went out of my head there. In fact, I don't remember Grzesik up on that hill either. I really don't.

Q. Which squad were you in--the number of the squad?

A. It was the 3d Squad.

Q. Of which platoon?

A. Of LT Calley's platoon.

Q. Did you ever see a ditch with a lot of bodies in it?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. Did this ditch have any relationship to the group that you were talking about, or was this another group of bodies?

A. That was another group.

Q. Do you have any idea what happened to this group of bodies that were in the ditch--how they got there?

A. How they got there? Yes, they was pushed in there

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1 and told to get off in the ditch and then they was started  
2 to getting killed.

3  
4 Q. Who did that?

5 A. I am not answering.

6  
7 Q. Do you remember the location of this ditch with  
8 reference to the location of the village--north, south,  
9 east, west?

10 A. It was on the north side.

11  
12 Q. Was there any water in this ditch?

13 A. Yes, there was.

14  
15 Q. Did you see one or more helicopters come in and  
16 make a landing?

17 A. No, I didn't.

18  
19 Q. On the east side of the village?

20 A. I didn't see no helicopters come in.

21  
22 Q. More testimony. (Colonel Wilson reading as  
23 follows.)

24  
25 "Q. Paul testified that you told him that LT  
26 Calley machine-gunned a group of civilians.

27  
28 "A. I didn't see anything. I think it might  
29 be a misphrasing of words. I didn't see him machine-  
30 gun any civilians.

31  
32 "Q. Do you have any reason to believe that he  
33 did this?

34  
35 "A. I was told he did it.

36  
37 "Q. Who told you?

38  
39 "A. Medloe.

40  
41 "Q. Did Medloe say he saw it?

42  
43 "A. He was pretty upset. He was very upset,  
44 as a matter of fact.

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1 "Q. So when did Medloe tell you this?  
2

3 "A. When I came across him in the village. As  
4 I say, he was rather upset. I found him sitting down  
5 on the ground. He was just sitting there."  
6

7 Did you feel that C Co went into this operation  
8 with vengeance or a get even attitude concerning anything  
9 that happened in the past?

10 A. Yes, I did.  
11

12 Q. Was this attitude developed from the briefings  
13 or from previous operations?

14 A. From previous operations, I think.  
15

16 Q. Do you recall whether or not this was your normal  
17 area of operations?

18 A. Yes, it was.  
19

20 Q. Do you ever remember receiving an order during  
21 the day before you went to the perimeter that stated to  
22 stop killing civilians?

23 A. Yes.  
24

25 Q. How did this order come down?

26 A. That we was supposed to have just killed the men  
27 and leave the women and children alone and that's all we  
28 was supposed to have done, and to stop killing the women  
29 and children and just kill the men.  
30

31 Q. How many combat assaults had you been on before  
32 this one?

33 A. I don't remember now.  
34

35 Q. Was there any difference in this operation and  
36 other operations that you had participated in?

37 A. Yes, there was a lot more to do on that operation  
38 than what there was. We went through that village and we  
39 never went through a village and just slaughtered the people.  
40

41 Q. Was SGT Mitchell in the vicinity of this incident  
42 with LT Calley?

43 A. No.  
44

45 Q. How were you separated from his--were you separated

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1 from his squad then?

2 A. Yes, I was. We were--I was, you know, most times  
3 we went out we really didn't stick together. We just went  
4 through there and we just rounded up the people and put them  
5 all in one location and then they were slaughtered.

6  
7 Q. Do you know how many times this happened?

8 A. How many times? How many groups there was? There  
9 was them two big ones and then three or four small ones, I  
10 remember.

11  
12 Q. Did you see those?

13 A. That's what I seen. That's what I remember seeing.

14  
15 Q. I am trying to separate something you may have  
16 heard from something you may have seen. I want to be sure.  
17 There is a big difference.

18 A. That is what I seen.

19  
20 Q. You said four groups?

21 A. Four or five little groups after the big ones.

22  
23 Q. Was this all in your platoon area?

24 A. It was everywhere and in the whole company area.

25  
26 Q. Did you see the actions of the 2d Platoon?

27 A. Yes, I did. I seen some of the small ones that  
28 they carried out.

29  
30 Q. Was there much discussion about this operation  
31 after it was over when you got back to Dottie?

32 A. I never did make it back to Dottie.

33  
34 Q. Oh, that's right. Did you run into many people  
35 from the company after you were wounded?

36 A. No, just the ones that were following me behind  
37 the mine detector.

38  
39 Q. I meant since you have been discharged.

40 A. Since I have been discharged? I met another guy  
41 from the time I went to basic training with and went to  
42 Hawaii with and then he got attached to the Headquarters  
43 Company and he was a truck driver and I didn't meet him too  
44 often over in Vietnam, just once in awhile. I seen him the  
45 other day and he lives in Terre Haute

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Q. Was he with C Co?

A. No, he was with Headquarters Co. Now he might have heard something about it. He might.

Q. Do you know what the body count for that operation was?

A. No, I don't. I imagine it was well over 200 though.

Q. Did you ever go back through the village once you cleared it?

A. Just to help burn it.

Q. Did you receive an order to burn the village?

A. Yes.

Q. Who was that from?

A. That would be from SGT Mitchell.

Q. Was it to burn all of the huts?

A. Just to burn what we could because we was getting ready to move out and they said burn it so we went back through there and burned as much as possible and moved on out.

Q. You didn't see Torres on this operation?

A. No, I don't remember.

Q. You said you were armed with an M-79?

A. No, M-16.

Q. Oh, M-16? What was LT Calley armed with?

A. M-16.

Q. Did LT Calley open fire on this group of Vietnamese?

A. I am not going to answer that.

Q. Mr. Meadlo, do you have any further information concerning the matters we have discussed?

A. No, I don't.

Q. Do you have any further statements to make regarding the operation?

A. No, I don't.

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1 Q. I want to remind you this is an official inves-  
2 tigation. It is privileged in the sense that my report  
3 will be made to the Chief of Staff of the Army for such  
4 use as he deems appropriate. You are requested not to  
5 discuss this investigation or the questions and answers  
6 covered during this period except as you otherwise may  
7 have a right to do so in accordance with law.

8  
9 (The witness was excused.)

10  
11 (The foregoing testimony of Mr. Paul D. Meadlo was  
12 taken stenographically and transcribed by Albert F. Smith,  
13 Supervisory Shorthand Reporter, Office of The Inspector  
14 General, Headquarters, Department of the Army.)  
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