

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

WITNESS: GRIMES, Joe

DATE OF TESTIMONY: 10 January 1970

PLACE OF TESTIMONY: Pentagon

WITNESS SUSPECTED OF: N/A

COUNSEL: None

DUTY ASSIGNMENT ON 16 MARCH 1968: SP4, Squad Leader, 3d Squad, 3d Platoon, C/1/20, Task Force Barker.

1. PREOPERATIONAL PLANS AND BRIEFINGS.

a. MEDINA's briefing on 15 March 1968.

The witness attended Captain MEDINA's briefing (pg. 3), and on the basis of the briefing thought they were going to hit a battalion of VC in My Lai (4) (pg. 6). MEDINA told them that it would probably be their first encounter with the enemy and that the hamlet would be all VC (pg. 4). There was a mention of burning houses, and they were told that there were not supposed to be any civilians in the hamlet at that time (pg. 5). The witness did not remember what reason was given for the civilians being absent (pg. 5). MEDINA did mention that it was their chance to get even (pg. 5). The witness did not recall a meeting of platoon leaders and platoon sergeants either before or after the company briefing (pg. 5).

b. Memorial service.

The witness thought the memorial service was held a few days prior to their entry into My Lai (4) by a Catholic chaplain whose name he did not remember (pg. 3). He believed that the ceremony was held for Sergeant COX and for several other men (pg. 6).

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c. The mood of the men in the unit.

He felt that the morale of the men in the unit was raised, in that they knew they were going to engage the enemy. He believed most of them felt "pretty good" and they had a "pretty high morale" (pg. 5). When they did not encounter the enemy the witness felt let down and stated the unit was ready for it (pg. 12). He thought the attitude of the men in the company towards the Vietnamese people was one of dislike. He agreed that the attitude was that "the life of a Vietnamese was not worth as much as the life of an American" (pg. 19).

2. ASSAULT ON MY LAI.

a. The landing area.

The helicopter that the witness was in landed approximately 200 meters from the edge of the village, indicated on Exhibit P-154 as point #1 (pgs. 23, 24). He exited through the right door and the village was on the other side of the aircraft, which faced south (pg. 24). They set up a perimeter which lasted for about four minutes and then received instructions from their platoon leader to go get a weapon from a man who was reported by a helicopter (pg. 25). The squad went to the spot on line, could not find the man, started to return towards the hamlet and went back to the location when the helicopter dropped a smoke grenade. They found a man there with a rifle. The man was dead on their arrival. The witness did not recall what kind of a helicopter dropped the grenade (pgs. 7, 8, 25, 26).

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b. Movement through the village.

The squad next moved from their position southwest of the village to the south where people had been reported fleeing (pgs. 8, 21). He recalled being accompanied for a short while by a photographer (pgs. 8, 33). He saw one house burning on the west side of the village as they moved around to the south (pg. 8). They swung through a rice paddy to the south side, not going as far as the highway. They proceeded to go through the rice paddies in an easterly direction and came upon a small hamlet to the southeast of My Lai (4) (pg. 9). There were people in the hamlet, mostly women and old men with a few children (pgs. 9, 11). He saw the bodies of women and children and some babies on a trail 30 meters south of My Lai (4), but did not see any

other bodies (pg. 11). His squad encountered no resistance as they moved and heard no firing other than some shots in the northwest end of the village shortly after they landed (pgs. 11, 12). The squad took no prisoners and did not round up any civilians (pg. 12). He stated he possibly heard men talking about an order to stop the killing and burning, but he never received one directly (pg. 12).

c. His knowledge of activities in the village.

He first became aware of a number of civilians being killed in My Lai (4) from discussion of the other men who mentioned that they burned the houses and killed the livestock and some people (pg. 13). He did not see a ditch with a number of dead people in it and the only bodies he saw were the ones on the trail south of the village (pg. 14). Although he did not enter the village, he felt that there were not many people there at the time, because he did not see very many (pg. 14).

d. Later movement of the unit.

The witness remembered laagering in a graveyard with B Company for the night (pg. 14). He recalled capturing a few men and a nurse in the area of the Song Tra Khuc River on 17 March (pg. 16). As they moved on 17 March, he did not recall passing through any hamlets but did see a few huts (pg. 16). He did not recall the unit burning any hamlets as they moved towards the water on 17 March. He agreed that on 18 March the unit was lifted out by helicopter and taken back to LZ Dottie (pg. 17).

e. His knowledge of prisoners.

The witness saw members of the National Police questioning VC suspects during the afternoon of 16 March (pgs. 14, 15). He did not recall how many prisoners there were but did see one VC suspect shot. He stated that Captain MEDINA was there, but he could not recall the names of other American officers. He did not know Captain MICHLES or Captain KOTOUC (pg. 15). He did see the finger of one suspect being cut off but did not remember who did it (pg. 15). He thought it was an American officer whose grade he did not know. He did not know what kind of knife was used (pg. 16). The hand was placed on a solid object and the finger was cut off at the first joint (pg. 20).

3. INQUIRIES CONCERNING THE ASSAULT.

During the morning of 16 March the witness did not see any visiting officers from the task force, the brigade, or the division (pg. 13). He testified that he did not recall a field grade officer talking to the unit upon its return to LZ Dottie on 18 March. He did remember who Colonel HENDERSON was, but did not remember if HENDERSON met with the returning unit (pg. 17). He agreed that MEDINA told the unit that they should not discuss the incident except with an investigating officer (pg. 18). Possibly Sergeant LOPEZ told him that there was an investigation of My Lai (4), but he did not remember (pg. 18). He was not contacted by an investigating officer (pg. 18), and felt that the men would have told any investigating officer what had happened (pg. 19). He did not know why the incident was not reported, nor did he hear about it being covered-up (pg. 19).

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4. OTHER INFORMATION.

a. The witness testified he had gotten to know MEDINA very well and thought that MEDINA was "a pretty good officer." MEDINA tried to help them and to keep them straight (pg. 13).

b. The witness did not believe there was a marijuana problem in the unit, and did not think there was a serious use of it, or people going into combat under its influence (pg. 20).

EXHIBITS

EXHIBIT

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	NOTES	PAGES
P-7	Miscellaneous Scene	Shown to witness. Wit thinks it may	29
P-9	Miscellaneous Scene	be a house on the edge of the village	
P-14	Miscellaneous Scene	Wit felt it was taken on a trail near the medevac location.	34
P-17	Miscellaneous Scene	Wit identified LOPEZ as sixth man from the right.	32
P-25	Miscellaneous Scene	Witness identified himself.	33
P-41	Miscellaneous Scene	Wit did not recall seeing the bodies.	34
P-60	Miscellaneous Scene	Wit identified him- self and located the house at points on P-154.	34
P-69	Miscellaneous Scene	Wit identified DELPOME, and located it near point #3 on P-154.	37
P-70	Miscellaneous Scene	Wit located it at point #2 on P-154	38
P-126	Miscellaneous Scene	Wit identified him- self on the right, SMAIL as the third from right; R.D.	
		SMITH as fourth from right.	39
P-154	Aerial photo of the My Lai (4) area.	Used to orient the witness.	7
		Wit marked the LZ as point #1.	23,24

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EXHIBIT

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	NOTES	PAGES
P-154 (cont)	Aerial photo of the My Lai (4) area.	Wit marked the spot where he recovered a weapon as point #2.	
		Wit marked the location of a hut they burned as point #3.	26
		Wit indicated the area where he operated as point #4.	27
		Wit marked the location of his radio call to his platoon leader as point #5.	28
		Wit marked location of Exhibit P-9, and also where the medevac ship landed.	29
MAP-4	Map 6739 II	Used to orient the witness.	30 7

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(The hearing reconvened at 0820 hours, 10 January 1970.)

MR WEST: The hearing will come to order.

RCDR: The following persons are present: MR WEST, COL WILSON, and MAJ COOP.

The next witness is Mr. Joe GRIMES.

(MR GRIMES was called as a witness, was sworn, and testified as follows:)

RCDR: Will you state your full name, occupation, and address?

A. My name is Joe GRIMES. I live at in Pasadena, Texas, and I'm a laborer.

MR WEST: Mr. GRIMES, before we start in with any questions, I want to advise you concerning the purpose and nature of this inquiry. This investigation was directed jointly by the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff, United States Army, for the purpose of determining facts and making findings and recommendations concerning two things:

(1) the adequacy of the prior investigations into what now has become known as the My Lai incident of 16 March 1968, and

(2) possible suppression or withholding of information by any person who had a duty to report and furnish information concerning this incident. In other words, whether there was any coverup.

We are not investigating all the facts and circumstances of what happened at My Lai. For example, we are not concerned with possible criminal culpability of any person for something that they did there that might have been an offense.

We have had made available to us and have reviewed prior official statements obtained in other investigations of the My Lai incident. I don't recall whether you have made a statement to anybody else or not.

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Your testimony will be taken under oath. A verbatim transcript will be prepared. A tape recording is being made in addition to the verbatim notes being taken by the court reporter.

The general classification of our report will be confidential, but it is possible that testimony or parts of it may later become a matter of public knowledge. This is something that we have no control over.

We ask that you not discuss your testimony before this panel with others, including other witnesses, except as you may be required to do or asked to do before a competent administrative, judicial, or legislative body. For example, there is a subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee inquiring into the My Lai incident. They have called some witnesses. We have asked you not to talk about what goes on here but this, of course, doesn't apply to the House subcommittee. I think you are probably aware, also, from the news, that there is a court-martial case pending against Lieutenant CALLEY. The military judge in that case has issued an order directing certain witnesses or potential witnesses to refrain from any public discussion of the case. Have you received an order from the military judge?

A. No, sir. I haven't.

Q. I did want to advise you, in case you had, that your appearance here to answer questions would not change the applicability of that order. You might keep that in mind in case you do subsequently receive an order. Any questions about this part of it?

A. No.

Q. For the record, Mr GRIMES, were you a member of the United States Army on 16 March 1969?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. When were you discharged?

A. April 7, 1969.

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Q. On 16 March 1968, what was your grade and assignment and your outfit?

A. I was with C/1/20. I was a specialist four. I was a squad leader in the 3d Platoon, third squad.

Q. At that time C/1/20 was part of Task Force Barker?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And when did you first hear of the planned combat assault against this little hamlet of My Lai (4)?

A. Well, sir, I think it was a day or a couple of days before we went into the village. We received an order to go in. We had been pretty close to it, but we never had gone in as far as I can remember.

Q. Was this at a company briefing held by Captain MEDINA?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you remember a memorial service about the time of the briefing, held for two or three men who had been killed in the company?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you remember when this was in relation to the briefing?

A. Not really, sir. I think it was a couple of days before we went into My Lai (4).

Q. Do you remember the chaplain who conducted the service? We know it was a major. A couple of people say he was a Catholic chaplain.

A. I think he was Catholic, sir. I don't remember his name.

Q. Going back to the briefing by Captain MEDINA, what did he tell the company during the briefing, that you recall?

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A. As far as I can remember, sir, he said we had gotten this order to go into My Lai (4), and to expect to engage a battalion of VC who were reportedly to be there at that time.

Q. Did he indicate how long the operation was to last?

A. Not as far as I can remember, sir.

Q. Did he talk about what kind of a mission it was? I believe, up to this time, you had done mostly search and clear and patrol operations or things of that nature.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What did he say about this one?

A. Well, he said this was going to be probably our first engagement with the enemy, since we hadn't had any. We had had a couple of snipers, and mostly what we ran across were minefields, booby traps, and stuff like that. This would probably be our first time to engage the enemy, and to be prepared.

Q. Up to this time, the company had suffered quite a few casualties at the hand of Charlie, but never came to grips with him. Is that the way it was?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What did he tell you about the hamlet and what to do in there?

A. Well, he said that we were supposed to engage the enemy at that time, and that it was strictly a VC hamlet. As far as they knew, it was supposed to be all VC, and we were supposed to destroy it.

Q. Anything said about livestock or other food, or whether to burn the houses? Do you recall that?

A. I think there was mention of burning houses. Well, the food we usually found, like rice, for instance,

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they sometimes called helicopters in to take it out if there was a large quantity of rice, and if it was suspected to be a VC hamlet.

Q. Did he talk to you about the civilian residents in the village? Did he say anything about that?

A. Yes, sir. They said that there were not supposed to be any civilians in that hamlet at that time.

Q. Was there any explanation why?

A. Not that I can remember, sir.

Q. Do you remember hearing anything said about the possibility that most of the civilians would be away at market at the time the combat assault went in?

A. I'm not too sure, sir.

Q. What was the mood of the men of the company after this briefing? How did they feel about the next day's operation?

A. Well, sir, I think most of them, they felt pretty good. We had been there quite a while, and we lost several men. We were never able to get back at them, and I think it raised their morale up a little bit, as far as knowing that we were going to be engaged by the enemy. I'd say we had pretty high morale.

Q. Did Captain MEDINA talk about, you may have mentioned this already, that you had a chance to get even with Charlie? This sort of thing.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you know if there was a meeting of platoon leaders and platoon sergeants around the time of the company briefing, either before or after?

A. I don't recall it, sir.

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COL WILSON: You say you had the third squad of the 3d platoon?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. How long had you had that squad?

A. I had it for about 3 or 4 months.

Q. Which squad did Sergeant COX have?

A. It was -- I don't recall. It was either the first or the second. I don't remember which one it was.

Q. Do you remember when Sergeant COX got killed?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you recall who that ceremony was for, right before this operation?

A. Well, I think it was for Sergeant COX and several other men.

Q. As I remember, did you say this was a couple of days before the briefing, or did you say it was on the day of the briefing?

A. I wasn't too sure on that. I think it was a couple of days before the briefing.

Q. What did you think formed the basis of Captain MEDINA's briefing? What did you think you were going to hit in My Lai (4)?

A. A battalion of VC.

Q. One battalion?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know what the normal strength of a VC battalion is?

A. 400, 500 men.

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MR WEST: Mr. GRIMES, let's go now to the next day, the 16th, the actual combat assault on My Lai (4). I also show you an enlarged aerial photograph of My Lai (4) and the immediate vicinity, Exhibit P-1, and along with it a 1:25,000 scale map, which has been admitted into evidence as Exhibit MAP-4.

(MR. WEST orients witness on Exhibits P-1 and MAP-4.)

Does this look familiar to you now a little bit?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Could you tell us, now, after you were lifted in, what your squad did and what the 3d Platoon did that morning?

A. Well, my squad, when we first landed--when we first landed, we heard some shots. The first group that went in, I don't know whether it was the 1st or 2d Platoon, they said it was a cold LZ. And then, after a while, they heard some shots. And they called back and said it was a hot LZ, so we landed right in here. I had my squad over down in here, where we landed, and there was a helicopter that had my squad. Lieutenant LACROSS was with me at that time.

Q. Your platoon leader at that time was Lieutenant LACROSS, for the 3d Platoon?

A. Yes, that's right.

Q. Do you remember now?

A. Yes, sir. So there was a helicopter down on this side. I don't know whether it was west of where we landed, but a helicopter went by and said they had seen a VC crawling into a hedge, or something like that. So I put my squad on line and we walked over to this place. We couldn't find anything, so then we started going back towards the hamlet here. And the helicopter again went by and said he was going to drop smoke on the place where this man was. So he did. He circled back around and dropped a smoke grenade, and then we proceeded to go there. We did find a man there with a rifle, and he was dead on our arrival there.

Q. Was this a bubbletop helicopter?

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A. Sir, I don't remember.

Q. All right. What happened next?

A. Well, after that, all the time that we were there I had my squad on the west side and south side of the hamlet. They had called us, and said they had seen people on the south side running away from the village. So I took my squad to go search and see what it was. Sometimes we didn't find anybody.

Q. Let me ask you something. Do you remember a photographer and a reporter from the PIO detachment of brigade with you that morning? }

A. Yes, sir. I believe for a little while he was with my squad, because while we were on line, going to this designated place where the smoke grenade was thrown, they were with us at that time. They took a picture at that time, while we were going. } 176

Q. Colonel WILSON will show you some photographs later on, and maybe you can pick that one out. The photographer's name was HAEBERLE, and the reporter's name was ROBERTS. I don't know whether you knew them at the time. } 176

A. No, sir. I didn't.

Q. Could you describe what you did and what happened when you swung south down below the village? I understand that you moved all the way down as far as the highway down there. Is that right?

A. It's pretty close to it, sir. Yes, sir.

Q. Would you just take us along step by step as you remember?

A. Yes, sir. After we were down here, on the west side I believe, we did go in on the west side of the village for just a few minutes. We didn't get to see anything. I believe we did see one house that was burning, and I think they had some people gathered around there pretty close to that house on the west side of the hamlet. Then, we continued to come around to the south.

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Q. You swung around through the rice paddy and down around to the southern part?

A. Yes, sir. Down to this trail along here, and there were some more on the south side--there was some more huts around in here (indicating south of the village). That's all that my squad did: look for people who were coming out.

Q. You didn't go down to the highway, then?

A. I don't believe that we went that far, sir.

Q. I think, perhaps, that it might have been another squad with which HAEBERLE and ROBERTS went, and they actually went down as far as the highway.

A. Yes, sir. I don't remember actually seeing the rest of my platoon at that time, until we started going down to the east.

Q. Well, after you scouted out around to the south, did you come back and go through with the rest of the platoon?

A. No, sir. We kept on over here to the south side, going east.

Q. Through the rice paddies to the east?

A. Yes, sir, towards the east. There was another small village here.

Q. Indicating a small hamlet, a little east, a little south of My Lai (4).

A. Yes, sir. We went in there. We were going by and we saw a lot of people there, so we went over there. There were just mostly women and old men who were there.

Q. What happened there?

A. We called and told them there were just old people, men and women and children. There were a few kids there.

Q. Was your squad working separately at this time?

A. Yes, sir. My squad was over here, and the other two squads were down here. So they told us just to come on back, and just leave them alone, that we were going to head out down this way to the east.

Q. Did you ever go through the village of My Lai (4) itself?

A. No, sir.

Q. How about the other two squads?

A. I don't know, sir.

Q. I understand that they did, that they had a mission to burn the houses. That's what we have been told. Do you recall this?

A. No, sir.

Q. Sort of a mop-up mission. The mortar platoon members who were with Charlie Company that day, nearly eight to ten of them, they went along with the 3d Platoon.

A. Well, it must have been with the first and second squads, then.

Q. Were you separated from Lieutenant LACROSS most of the morning?

A. Yes.

Q. What communication did you have? A platoon net?

A. Yes, sir. I had a little PRC-9.

Q. That sounds right. Was this the kind that was in your helmet?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. All these women and children who were over there in this little subhamlet southeast of My Lai (4), did you just leave them there?

A. Yes, sir. They stayed there.

Q. Did you see any of them killed, or anybody else killed there that morning?

A. Not there, sir.

Q. Where did you see them?

A. Down here. I think it was on the south side here, on this trail here.

Q. We have had, just about where you have your pencil there, we have had several bits of evidence that there was a group of people on the trail, maybe 30 meters out, south of the village.

A. Yes.

Q. They mentioned women, children, and some babies.

A. Yes.

Q. What did you see.

A. I saw some women and babies there.

Q. This was as you moved along the south edge of the village, west to east?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you remember about what time this was?

A. No, sir. I couldn't say exactly what time it was.

Q. Did you see any other dead people around?

A. No, sir. Those are the only ones whom I saw at this place.

Q. At any time during the morning, were you taken under fire? Did your squad meet any resistance?

A. No, sir.

Q. How did the men feel about this? Were they surprised?

A. Well, I would imagine so, sir.

Q. How did you feel after all the buildup?

A. It kind of let me down for a while. We thought that we were really going to get engaged by the enemy, and I think that we were ready for it.

Q. Could you hear firing in the hamlet? Particularly early in the morning. The first thing in the morning.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What was it like?

A. There wasn't too much firing. I did hear some shots down in this edge of the village, down in here. 180

Q. The northwest end?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. That's before you skirted around?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did your platoon take any prisoners that morning? 17

A. My squad didn't, sir.

Q. How about civilians? Did you round up any civilians? 17

A. No, sir.

Q. Did you hear an order to stop the killing and the burning sometime during the morning?

A. I'm not too sure, sir. I think I did. I heard something about it, or I heard some of the men talking about it. Nobody ever called me or anything, but I'd seen some men who were on the south--by this trail here. I saw some men

there, and they had said that somebody had called and said that we were going to move out.

Q. This was just--late in the morning, was it?

A. Yes.

Q. During the morning, did you see any visiting officers from Task Force Barker, brigade, or division? }

A. No, sir.

Q. Did you get to know Captain MEDINA very well?

A. Fairly well, yes, sir.

Q. What kind of an officer was he?

A. Well, to me, sir, I think that he was a pretty good officer, sir. He tried to keep all of his men straight and everything. He tried to help them if he could in any way that he could.

Q. Were you aware, at the time, that a lot of Vietnamese civilians were being killed at My Lai (4)? }

A. No, sir.

Q. When did you first hear about it?

A. Well, after we got out of here and headed this way to the east--

Q. (Interposing) How did you hear it? From other men talking? }

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember what you heard?

A. No, not exactly, sir. I couldn't say it in the exact words, but they said that they burned all the houses and killed the livestock that was in there, and some people. But I wouldn't know, sir, because I wasn't in there.

Q. When you were over around this hamlet that was to the southeast of My Lai (4), did you see a ditch with a lot of people in it? A lot of dead women and children?

A. No, sir. The only people whom I saw were on this trail to the south.

Q. Going back, now, to the matter of the number of Vietnamese civilians being killed in the village that morning, one thing that we have been trying to determine is why this happened. It is pretty unusual. Some people have thought that at least parts of the company were out of control that morning. Do you have any thoughts on this subject? Did you hear such a thing? Did you have that impression?

A. No, sir. Well, first, if I may say so. Well, usually whenever we went into a village, I don't know, I guess this was one of the largest ones in which we had been. As far as they were saying that there were hundreds of people there, I do not believe this, that there were that many people in the village at that time.

Q. I take it you didn't see very many, then?

A. No, sir.

Q. Do you remember what the company did the rest of the day after they left My Lai (4)?

A. Well, we did go all the way to the China Sea. Was it that day or the next?

Q. I'll just outline it quickly. You were out in the field 3 days. On the afternoon of the 16th, you moved east, a little north, and met up with Bravo Company, and laagered for the night in a graveyard.

A. Yes, that's right.

Q. That afternoon, perhaps late afternoon, did you remember seeing any members of the National Police, Vietnamese National Police? There were some there, and they were questioning some VC suspects. Did you see that?



A. Yes, I believe I did, sir. {

Q. Do you remember how many there were? }

A. No, sir. I don't. {

Q. Did you see them shoot any VC suspects? } ①

A. One. {

Q. Do you remember the names of the American officers who were there at the time? } ②

A. No, sir. I don't. {

Q. Any of them at all? }

A. No, sir. {

Q. Captain MEDINA was supposed to have been there? } ③

A. Yes, sir, he was there. {

Q. Did you know Captain MICHLES of Bravo Company? }

A. No, I didn't. {

Q. Did you know KOTOUC, the S2 of Task Force Barker? } ④

A. I think I heard his name mentioned, but I didn't know him. {

Q. Did you see or did you hear about the fingers of one of these suspects being cut off during the questioning? } ⑤

A. Yes, sir. {

Q. Did you see this yourself? } ⑥

A. Yes, sir. {

Q. Did you see who did it? }

A. No, sir. I don't remember who it was, sir. } ⑦

Q. Was it an American officer?

A. I think so.

Q. You don't remember his grade?

A. No, sir. I don't. I saw it from a distance.

Q. Do you remember what kind of knife it was?

A. No, sir.

Q. Did this cause some talk around the company in your squad?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you remember what was said? What the reaction was to it?

A. Well, not exactly, sir. I don't think they were too pleased about it, really.

Q. Did it strike you as unusual for an American officer to do such a thing?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. The next day the company moved. The 1st Platoon, actually, had a mission up on Hill 85. The company generally moved on down, and this is maybe what you thought was the sea, the Song Tra Khuc River, and captured a couple of men and a nurse. You may recall that instance?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Then you moved back up here, and spent the night in a rice paddy. Do you recall going through any hamlets that day, the second day?

A. Well, there were a few huts there. I wouldn't say they were very big, the ones that I saw.

Q. Was there any particular action that took place that day of any importance? Did you run into any VC? Did you have any fights with anybody?

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A. They got these two men--

Q. (Interposing) Apart from the two men and nurse. What did the company do with the little hamlets they moved through? Do you recall?

A. I don't, sir.

Q. We have had evidence that the company burned about three hamlets as they moved through on their way down to the water. Do you remember this?

A. No, sir.

Q. On the third day, the 18th, the company was lifted out by helicopter and taken back to LZ Dottie.

A. Yes.

Q. Do you recall this?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. When your group landed, do you remember anything taking place there? For example, did a field grade officer meet you, talk to the group?

A. I don't remember, sir.

Q. All right. We have had Colonel HENDERSON here. He was the brigade commander. Do you remember him?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. He said that he met with some of the men as they came back, got a few groups together, and talked to them about what had happened at My Lai (4) on the morning of the 16th. This is what I was getting at. Do you remember that at all?

A. No, sir.

Q. Later on, did you remember Captain MEDINA getting the company together and talking about My Lai (4)?

A. I think I do, sir. I'm not too sure about what was said or anything.

(GRIMES)

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Q. Was it a short time after this?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Well, will you think hard and see if you can think of what he said? What he told the company? He did talk to them about My Lai (4).

A. Sir, I can't remember what he said, sir.

Q. We understand that he told the company that there was an investigation going on about what happened at My Lai (4) on the morning of the 16th. He told them they shouldn't talk to anybody about it, except persons such as an investigating officer, who had an official reason.

A. I heard that, sir.

Q. You don't remember that in connection with the company?

A. No, sir.

Q. What did you hear about the investigation?

A. Just that there was an investigation at My Lai (4), that we weren't supposed to talk to anybody.

Q. You don't remember who told you this, though?

A. No, sir. I can't.

Q. Your platoon sergeant was Sergeant LOPEZ?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Could Sergeant LOPEZ have been the one who told you?

A. He could have been, sir. I don't honestly know.

Q. Did anybody ever come around and talk to you? An investigating officer?

A. No, sir.

Q. Do you think if an investigating officer had come around that the men of the company would have told him what had happened there that morning?

A. I would imagine so, sir.

Q. What was the attitude of the men of Charlie Company toward the Vietnamese people? Did they like them, or dislike them, or how did they feel?

A. Well, most of them I'd say disliked them, sir.

Q. Do you think there was a feeling that perhaps the life of a Vietnamese wasn't worth as much as the life of an American?

A. I would say that that was the attitude. Yes, sir.

Q. I think you are aware that this incident of My Lai (4) was not well known until very recently?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. As a matter of fact, it was not reported--what happened that morning was not reported in the usual way. And it wasn't until April 1969, that Department of the Army here at Washington learned about it. Do you have any idea why it wasn't reported?

A. No, sir.

Q. Did you ever hear anything about a coverup or an effort to keep it from being known?

A. No, sir.

Q. The newspapers had stories in November about the possibility that some of the men of the company were under the influence of marijuana on that morning at My Lai (4). Do you know anything about this?

A. No, sir.

Q. Was there a marijuana problem in the company?

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A. I don't believe so, sir.

Q. I don't mean just a few men smoking marijuana, but serious use of it by men going into combat under the influence?

A. I don't believe so, sir. No.

COL WILSON: Mr. GRIMES, when you saw this man cut the Vietnamese' finger off, how far away were you from him? What distance approximately?

A. I would say about 50 feet.

Q. Pretty close then?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was the hand placed on a solid object and cut off like that? How was this done?

A. Yes, sir. It was placed on an object. I don't remember what it was. It was a solid object underneath.

Q. How much of the finger was cut off?

A. I think it was the first joint.

Q. Did you see that?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. You were down there in the south?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. The one man who shot himself in the foot down there. Do you recall that?

A. I saw a glimpse of him when they took him out.

Q. You saw the helicopter come in?

A. Yes, sir. I also saw the man.

Q. His name was what? Do you remember? CARTER?

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A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was this helicopter, the helicopter that came to pick him up, near the location where you said the bodies were, the group of bodies along the trail? Or was it in the south of the village? Was it close to the village where the helicopter landed?

A. Yes, sir. It was right on the south side. I think it was on the west side of this little trail here, on the south side.

Q. How long was that helicopter there?

a. I think he just picked him up, picked the man up.

Q. Landed, and then took off?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you see any other helicopters come in that day to pick people up?

A. No, sir. I saw some flying around, but I didn't see any. No, sir.

Q. One other question. I'm interested in the method of contact that you had on the south. The platoon that was moving through the south part of the village was not the 3d Platoon, and you were off to the right of it. Did you maintain contact with these people, or how did you keep yourself from moving ahead of them with firing going on?

A. Well, actually, we were over here by--my squad, really, was really by ourselves.

Q. There was some distance between you and the company?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was there any question in your mind at any time whether your squad would get ahead of the company, or the company would get ahead of your squad, or were you kind of floating to the rear, or what?

A. Well, sir, the rest of the company was in the village. I say the rest of it. I don't know how many were in there. But what we were doing, we were just roaming this south side trying to see if anybody would come out of the village. That was our purpose there.

MR WEST: Mr. GRIMES, can you think of anything else that might be of help to our investigation that you could tell us? Anything at all, we would appreciate at this time. For example, do you know whether any member of the company was talked to by an investigating officer? Did anybody talk to anybody?

A. Not that I know of, sir.

Q. Can you think of anything else?

A. No, sir.

MR WEST: We very much appreciate your coming to see us. We know it's been a lot of trouble due to bad weather. You've helped us, and we are very grateful to you. I'll leave the interrogation now. If you will stay with Colonel WILSON, he'll show you some photographs and documents.

A. Okay, sir.

MR WEST: Thank you very much. The hearing will be recessed.

(The hearing recessed at 0910 hours, 10 January 1970.)

(The hearing reconvened at 0921 hours, 10 January 1970.)

COL WILSON: The hearing will come to order. COL WILSON is present.

I remind you that you are still under oath. I want to proceed with further orientation, and I want to go over--I've got a couple of photographs to show you, and I want to go over the area in a little more detail.

(COL WILSON oriented the witness on additional photography.)

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COL WILSON: I would like you to go through this book of photographs, and when you find a photograph where you recognize either the people or the place, write the number of it down. We'll talk about it after you go through all the photographs. There may be some photographs I won't ask you about, since we already know who the people are. But we are also interested in place locations. So anything that you remember in the photographs, just write the number down, and we'll talk about it when you get through.

The hearing will be recessed.

(The hearing recessed at 0927 hours, 10 January 1970.)

(The hearing reconvened at 0943 hours, 10 January 1970.)

COL WILSON: The hearing will come to order. COL WILSON is present.

Mr. GRIMES, we are going to put the individual photographs aside, and now I would like, from the beginning of the landing, to try to trace your activities through or near the village of My Lai (4). Now, you went into a landing zone. Do you remember how far your helicopter was from the edge of the village?

A. Approximately. About 200 meters.

Q. Do you remember this east-west tree line on the far side of the landing zone (indicating on aerial photograph Exhibit P-1)?

A. I'm not positive, sir.

Q. Do you remember the direction your aircraft faced when you landed? Maybe this would help. Do you remember which door you came out of?

A. I think the right-hand side.

Q. As you faced the front of the aircraft?

A. Yes, sir.

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Q. You got out of the right door. Were you facing the village when you got out?

A. It was to my left, I believe.

Q. I mean, when you jumped out of the door, were you looking at the village? Or was it on the other side of the aircraft?

A. On the other side.

Q. So, the aircraft was facing south?

A. I believe so, sir. I don't recall that.

Q. You say you were about 200 meters from the village. This is going to put you about right here. Do you remember seeing this stream? You got up by that stream, didn't you?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was there any water in it?

A. I believe so, sir.

Q. How far were you from that stream, or does that recall anything?

A. I couldn't say, sir. I couldn't say how far.

Q. We're talking about approximations.

A. It was about halfway.

Q. (Marking on Exhibit P-1 which is later entered into evidence with annotations as Exhibit P-154.) Point 1 is the approximate area where Mr. GRIMES landed. What happened next?

A. When we landed here, we scattered out. And a helicopter called, I don't remember whom, I think it was Captain MEDINA. He was on the outskirts of the village, and then, in turn, he called our lieutenant and said a helicopter had seen a man with a weapon. It was out here by this stream.

Q. Let me go over this once more.

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(COL WILSON orients witness on Exhibit MAP-4.)

Q. The stream bed, you should have been able to recognize it even if there wasn't water in it.

A. I think there was a little water in it, sir. I do believe we crossed it, to where the man with the weapon was.

Q. You think you crossed the stream to pick up the weapon?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Let me ask you what you did first. Did you set up a perimeter?

A. We set up for a little while, right where we landed. We got off the helicopter and squatted down for a little while.

Q. That wasn't very long. How long do you think that was?

A. About 3 or 4 minutes.

Q. Now, was yours the only squad that was sent out to recover this weapon?

A. I believe so, sir.

Q. And did you receive instructions from your platoon leader to go get the weapon?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. With your squad?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And you think you recovered the weapon on the other side of the stream?

A. I believe so, sir. I'm not positive where it was. There was a hedgerow at that particular point, and he was underneath the hedgerow. So the first time we went over there,

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we didn't find anything. So we started back, and on our way back we received another call that a helicopter was going to go by and drop a smoke grenade. We then turned back around and went straight to where the smoke was. And we looked around for a little while, and they found this man with the weapon.

Q. You say there was a tree line?

A. A hedgerow, I believe.

Q. Do you remember a hedgerow more than you do a stream?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. So you really don't recall a stream. The reason I asked this is because I believe you came to a hedgerow here, to the south.

A. We were pretty close to the stream.

Q. So you do recall a stream, and you think that that weapon was recovered near the stream?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Well, we'll put it down as an approximate area. Did you say you crossed the stream?

A. I'm not too positive now.

Q. Point 2, and you did recover the weapon?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What was it?

A. I don't recall what make it was, sir.

Q. From a dead VC.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. So point 2 (Exhibit P-154) is the area where the weapon was recovered. All right. What happened after that?

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A. I believe that is when we came back and went into this section of the village down here.

Q. Sergeant GRIMES' route of march has been traced as going into the village and heading south, and coming out on the southwest corner. Did anything happen there that you remember?

A. I remember we burned one hut up there.

Q. Point 3, one hut burned. Did you burn the hut, or did your squad burn the hut?

A. I did.

Q. Now, when you came out on the southwest side of the village, did anything happen down there?

A. Not that I can recall, sir.

Q. So then, what did you do? Did you move all the way down?

A. We just started roving around in this particular area (indicating just to the south of the village).

Q. What mission did you have?

A. To block off anything that was coming out.

Q. Who told you to do that?

A. I believe our lieutenant, or, I don't remember if it was our sergeant or our lieutenant.

Q. But you were told to go on the southern side of the village to block the movement of VC, or civilians, or what?

A. Whatever came out.

Q. Were you supposed to send them back in, or what?

A. Send them back.

Q. Send them back into the village?

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A. Yes, sir.

Q. Where did you center your operations? Did you more or less operate through the central southern part?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Point 4, general area where Mr. GRIMES was assigned the mission of sending all personnel leaving village to the south back into the village. How many people did you send back?

A. I don't remember sending any back. Actually, I don't remember seeing anyone leave the village, really.

Q. Okay, now, what happened after that? After you did your patrolling around there, where did you go from there?

A. From here we proceeded on to this other little hamlet. (C) (S) (M)

Q. The hamlet southeast of My Lai (4)?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And what happened there?

A. Well, we saw a group of people there, and we went over and checked them out, and checked the huts to see if we could find anything. And I believe I called back and told them they were women and some old men, what did they want to do with them? They said just leave them alone, come back, and join them, which was moving out away from My Lai (4).

Q. Were you about in the center of the village when you did that? When you radioed back?

A. I was pretty close to the edge.

Q. You transmitted this by radio?

A. Yes.

Q. To whom did you talk?

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A. I believe it was my lieutenant, sir. I'm not too sure.

Q. Point 5. Now, where did you go from there?

A. I think we went on down in here and spent the night there. I think. I don't really remember.

Q. This will be far enough anyhow. What I want to know is what were you told after making this report about the women and children?

A. Just to go on and come back.

Q. And join the rest of the platoon?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. You moved out of the east side of the village to do this? Is that correct?

A. I believe so, sir. Yes.

Q. You didn't go back the way you came? You didn't go back to the south?

A. No, sir. That is about as well as I can remember, sir.

Q. Now, let's go over these photographs.

Q. P-7 shows CARTER, Mr. GRIMES, located on the photograph as indicated. Did you see P-9?

A. No, sir.

Q. Do you recognize this house in the background?

A. I think that house was around here.

Q. It was inside the village?

A. Right. On the edge, I think.

Q. Photo P-9 is plotted on the aerial photo. Did you see CARTER lying down on the ground?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Now, P-11 and P-12 show the helicopter. You said you saw the helicopter come in, right?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Could you give me the location where the helicopter landed?

A. I think it was in here (pointing to east side of the north-south trail).

Q. The helicopter landed on the plowed field?

A. Yes.

Q. That isn't a plowed field. That is a field with growing rice.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Does that recall anything?

A. No, sir.

Q. We'll plot it where you think it was. You think it was on the east side of the trail?

A. I think so, sir.

Q. About halfway down the trail. About how far from the village? How many meters do you think it was?

A. It wasn't too far from the edge of the village.

Q. Are you talking about 20 or 40 meters from the village.

A. Maybe it was a little more than that, I believe.

Q. P-11 and photo P-12 must be the same photograph. Did you see them loading, or was it in another direction from you?

A. I don't recall seeing them put him in there.

Q. So P-11 and P-12 would probably be in the same location. You don't recall any insignia or any identification on the helicopter, do you?

A. No, I don't.

Q. P-13, what do you recall about that photo?

A. Well, the only one that I remember is Lieutenant ALAUX.

Q. Pointing to the number one man. Who is the number three man?

A. His interpreter.

Q. Sergeant PHU?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you know where that photograph was taken?

A. No, sir.

COL WILSON: We'll take a short recess.

(The hearing recessed at 1011 hours, 10 January 1970.)

(The hearing reconvened at 1015 hours, 10 January 1970.)

COL WILSON: The hearing will come to order. COL WILSON is present. I remind you, you are still under oath. You don't know the location of P-13?

A. No, sir.

Q. P-17?

A. The only one I can recognize is Sergeant LOPEZ. I am pretty sure that is he.

Q. You think Sergeant LOPEZ is about the sixth man down from the right. Do you recognize that house?

A. I don't recall it, sir.

Q. We have reason to believe that P-17 and P-13 were taken at the same place from a different angle, and at a different time, of course. In P-13 everyone is sitting down, and in P-17 everyone is standing up. Also, we believe that this photograph was taken when the helicopter was taking off because you can see the position of the rice being blown. Also, we believe this photograph may have been taken when CARTER was evacuated, or it may have been taken when the information personnel, the photographer and a man named ROBERTS, who was a writer, left C Company and went to B Company. They may have been with you at that time, or they may have left you. I think they probably left you before this.

A. Yes.

Q. Do you recall seeing those individuals getting on a helicopter?

A. No, sir.

Q. This photograph was taken by the photographer, so unless he left with CARTER, which I don't believe happened, this was probably taken at a different time. Does this recall anything as far as location goes?

A. That trail, I believe, is this one that borders the village to the south.

Q. That's a pretty big house there. Do you recall seeing that house?

A. I couldn't say for sure, sir.

Q. P-25?

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A. That is me.

Q. What are you looking at there?

A. I don't recall. I didn't remember until I saw these pictures that it was actually me. I don't remember what I was looking at. I don't even recall it.

Q. The photographer was with you at this time, because he is the one who took the picture.

A. Yes, sir. That was, I believe, right after we came over here and went back (pointing to 2).

Q. It looks like it was in the village. Was this in the village?

A. That's when we came in over here, I believe (pointing to 3).

Q. In that general vicinity?

A. Yes, sir. That is the only place where I remember going into the village.

Q. Do you remember looking at those papers?

A. No, sir. To tell you the truth, I don't.

Q. You don't remember what they were?

A. I don't recall what they were, sir.

Q. I'm plotting P-25 in the general vicinity of point 3. You don't remember turning these documents over to anybody?

A. I might have, sir, but I don't recall it.

Q. You seem pretty interested in those documents?

A. I don't know.

Q. Was this near the area where you burned the hut?

A. I believe so, sir.

Q. P-14? Where was that?

A. I believe it was on this trail here, sir.

Q. Was that very close to where the helicopter landed?

A. I believe it was, sir.

Q. Photo P-41 shows a group of dead bodies. Let's look at this photograph for a minute. There seems to be rice paddies on both sides?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. There is a fence on one side, a barbed-wire fence. It appears to be leaning or knocked over, possibly from the weight of those bodies. Do you remember that?

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A. No, sir.

Q. How close did you get to these people?

A. I don't remember how close I was, sir.

Q. You don't remember anything about that?

A. No, sir.

Q. P-60?

A. That's myself.

Q. Where was that house, do you know?

A. I believe it was in the general vicinity of point 3.

Q. Near the place where you were reading the papers?

A. I believe so. As far as I can remember that is the only place that I went into the village.

Q. Did the photographer who went with you into the village ever leave you to go anywhere?

A. Did he do what now?

Q. Did he go off by himself?

A. Well, he left us after we went in the village. I don't know where he went to.

Q. Let me point something out to you. In accordance with the sequence that he took these photographs, I think one of the first photographs that he took was you, when you were reading those papers. And he took a photograph of Sergeant LOPEZ and somebody whom we haven't identified. He took another photograph of a burning hut, and then he took a photograph of some bodies burning in the courtyard of a house. Do you remember seeing that?

A. No, sir.

Q. He should have still been with you. Then he took a photograph of another man setting fire to a house. We believe that photograph is DUSTIN. Do you know DUSTIN? Do you know him?

A. I believe so, sir.

Q. Was he in the 3d Platoon?

A. I think he was, sir.

Q. But he wasn't in your squad?

A. I don't believe so, sir.

Q. It appears from the sequence of those photographs that the photographer must have left at least your people, your squad, sometime after taking the photograph of you with those papers. Although he could have been with the platoon. Because, after that, he took a photograph of the platoon sergeant, and then the next photograph of anything that we can recognize is DUSTIN. And the next one is a series of photographs

concerning CARTER's evacuation. Let's see if we can fix a time. When CARTER was wounded, the log says it was 1020, and the time he was evacuated, the log says 1030. Does this seem about the right time to you, remembering the helicopter coming in?

A. I couldn't say what time it was. I don't remember.

Q. Do you remember where you stopped to eat that day? Where you had chow?

(Witness shakes head in negative.)

Q. You don't remember this house in photo P-60? You don't remember where it was?

A. No, sir.

Q. But you think it was on the north side of the village?

A. I believe so, sir.

Q. Do you believe it was up there by point 3? You said you burned a hut up there. Is this what you are talking about?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. If I recall correctly, did you say your platoon was instructed to burn these huts?

A. Yes, sir.

(Exhibit P-60 was marked at point 3 as GRIMES burning the hut.)

Q. P-69 identified as DELPOME. Where was this taken?

A. I think that was in the same area. It was right after I burned one.

Q. Here is another series of photographs which shows

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P-60, which is the one where you were burning the hut. It was taken just before the photograph of DELPOME burning the hut. Was that very close to you, or do you know? Did you see this?

A. I don't recall, sir. But I think it was pretty close, because DELPOME was in my squad.

Q. Do you think it was at the same time?

A. I believe so, sir.

Q. I was trying to think back. It seemed to me you said that the 3d Platoon was on that side with the mission of burning the huts?

A. No, sir.

Q. Did Mr. WEST ask you that question?

A. I don't believe so, sir.

Q. But the platoon was assigned a mission to burn these huts?

A. I think the rest of our platoon was in the village, sir. I'm not too sure.

Q. Were you assigned the mission, as the squad leader, to burn the huts?

A. When we were at that particular point, yes.

Q. You think photo P-69 is close to where you burned the hut?

A. I believe so, sir.

Q. We will put it in a general vicinity (of point 3). Photo P-69, DELPOME burning a hut. The witness identified P-70, which is a positive of the negative roll, specifically, photo 27a in the sequence of photographs which is shown on the exhibit as missing. But he identifies the individuals in the photograph as himself, DELPOME, and the platoon leader. Where was that photograph taken?

A. It was in this area right here (indicating around 1), looking for that VC with a rifle.

Q. This was when you were going out to look for the VC. The platoon leader was that close to you?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was he with you when you went out to look for the VC?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. He got the weapon, didn't he?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. But it wasn't the whole platoon, just your squad that went out there?

A. Yes, sir. I don't know where the other two squads were. Whether they stayed where we landed, or they went straight into the village. I don't recall.

Q. Photo P-70, indicated at point 2 on the aerial photo. Photo P-63 was taken right at the same time, or in the same sequence, that photo 70 was taken. You don't recognize that, do you?

A. I don't remember.

Q. It looks like the second man in the right of that photo is carrying a PRC-25. Does that look like a radio on his back to you?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. You saw this photo. This is the same one I showed you.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Anything in particular you want to say about that one?

A. No, sir.

Q. P-126. Could you name the people off from right to left?

A. That is myself (GRIMES on the right. The second man is unknown.), Sergeant SMAIL (third man.), SMITH--

Q. (Interposing) Which SMITH?

A. R. D. SMITH, or something like that (fourth man).

Q. Where was that photo taken?

A. I believe that was where we were going to bed down.

Q. The first night?

A. I don't remember.

Q. You don't remember that location?

A. No, sir.

Q. Anything else that you recall?

A. No, sir.

COL WILSON: I want to remind you that you shouldn't discuss this testimony, and that this investigation would have no effect on any testimony that you may make at a court-martial, or before a congressional committee. It does not restrict you from providing testimony to an administrative, legislative, or judicial body which may also be interested in this case. Have you got any questions? What we are trying to say is you shouldn't discuss it with people who will be witnesses in this case, and such as that.

A. Yes, sir.

COL WILSON: And if you have nothing further, we'll terminate the interview.

A. No, sir, I don't.

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COL WILSON: I appreciate your coming.

Aerial photograph annotated by Mr. GRIMES was entered into the record as Exhibit P-154.

The hearing will be recessed.

(The hearing recessed at 1130 hours, 10 January 1970.)

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