

(As of 26 Aug 71)

177 DONNER ALLEGATION (VVAW-WSI)

ALLEGATION:

1. Murder of a VN male.
2. Wounding of a 14-year-old VN girl.
3. Dereliction in the performance of duty.
4. Indiscriminate killing of livestock.
5. Failure to bury enemy dead.

SUBJECT/SUSPECTS:

1. Unidentified CO and members of the 20th Bde, 86th Cbt Engrs.
2. Unidentified ARVN unit.

COMPLAINANT: Mr. Donald C. Donner, former SP4, 20th Bde, 86th Cbt Engrs, Aug 67 - Jul 68.

BACKGROUND: Between 31 Jan and 2 Feb 71, at Detroit, MI, Mr. Donner testified in the "Winter Soldier Investigation" (WSI) as a member of an organization identified as Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW). Mr. Donner testified that sometime in May 68, approximately 25 kilometers south of Saigon, on Highway 1 or 4, 12 miles north of a bridge crossing the Mekong River, a 5-ton truck (driver unidentified) in a convoy ran over a VN civilian male about 40-45 years of age. As a result, the injured man bled to death. Mr. Donner contended that he had requested a helicopter to remove the injured man to a hospital for further treatment and was rebuked by the CO, 86th Cbt Engrs, who denied the request. Donner further alleged that in the Nha Be area, the unit fired across a river for no reason which resulted in the wounding of a 14-year-old girl. As a result of the wounds, the girl was permanently crippled. Donner also said livestock were killed for sport. On one occasion, on Highway 4, 12 miles north of the Mekong, a dead VC (16-year-old) was taken to a road by ARVN troops, tied to a pole, and left for three days as an example to others. Mr. Donner also related that at Bear Cat, 30 miles northeast of Saigon, 50 villagers who had fled from VC occupying their village were treated as enemy and placed in a PW compound when they came to Bear Cat for help.

STATUS/PROGNOSIS: Investigation completed; insufficient evidence.

Mr. Donner was interviewed by CID on 10 Jun 71. He stated that it was not the policy of the VVAW to give specific names, dates, and locations that might result in prosecution against anyone. He went on to say that he was of the opinion that the incident involving a 5-ton truck, which struck an old VN man on a bicycle, was an accident. A sharp projection on the bicycle had cut open the VN man's abdomen and medical aid had failed to stop the profuse bleeding. Donner said even if a medevac helicopter had arrived immediately, the man would not have lived. Donner also stated he thought the crippling of the VN girl was an accident. He said the incident occurred before his assignment to the unit, and later he had talked to the girl involved. Donner further stated he never saw livestock killed for sport, but acquired the information through hearsay. Concerning the incident involving a VC body displayed by ARVN troops, Donner said members of his unit complained about it until the body was removed. He also said that the villagers who had fled from the VC were processed, and this was probably standard procedure.

WITNESSES: Not identified.

INITIATED BY WHOM: AGC; WSI material is contained in the Congressional Records of 6 and 7 Apr 71.

RESPONSE TO INITIATOR: AGC notified of review and evaluation.