

Three criteria for evaluating the 'Pinkville' incident

By ROSBON D. B. WHEBEE
Last November, the Department of the Army announced that an investigation was being conducted into the alleged massacre by a U. S. Army unit of "several hundreds" of civilian citizens of My Lai Hamlet, Song My District, Republic of Viet Nam (RVN), in March, 1968.

According to the Army, information pertaining to the massacre was first reported during the summer of 1969 by a discharged enlisted member of another unit, (Specialist Fourth Class) Ronald Ridenhour. The informant "heard" about the incident from several buddies.

National and world attention was focused on the incident following the release of a statement by a former war correspondent and of pictures taken by a combat photographer allegedly at the scene of the atrocity.

Two former enlisted members of the unit, C Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, The Americal Division, were also interviewed by the TV news media. One stated that numerous atrocities were committed and, in fact, that the civilian populace of My Lai Hamlet was massacred in cold blood; the other denied knowledge of any atrocity.

Subsequently, the Department of the Army has formally charged 1st Lieutenant William L. Calley, Jr. a Platoon Leader of one platoon of Company C, with the murder of 109 civilians.

This charge is based on the military concept that the senior man in charge of a unit is responsible for all that happens and fails to happen within that unit, not on the fact that he is suspected of actually killing 109 people. Three of Lt. Calley's enlisted personnel have been charged in the same incident with a multiplicity of crimes ranging from murder to rape.

As a consequence of the publicity given the alleged massacre, worldwide indignation has evolved regarding the incident. Every conscientious citizen should abhor such atrocities if, in fact, they occurred. Indeed, such conduct by American Armed Forces personnel is reprehensible and contrary to the Articles of War established by the Geneva Convention. But, until Lt. Calley and his subordinates are given a fair trial,

it is the responsibility of the American public to consider these individuals innocent. A military investigation into the facts surrounding the My Lai incident is being conducted by a team headed by Lt. Gen. William Peers, as provided for by Article 32 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).

The defendants will be tried, if the evidence is sufficient (hear-say evidence is not admissible in a military court), by a General Courts Martial for violation of numerous articles of the UCMJ; it is the duty of this court, and only this court, to determine the guilt or innocence of these men.

Regardless of the findings of the court, there are several criteria which the American citizen should apply in an evaluation of the "Pinkville" case. The first area consists of a consideration of the facts pertaining to the mission of Charley Company: what the mission was, who authorized it, and the time element.

Company C was ordered to conduct a "search and destroy" operation in the Song My area, a Viet Cong-North Vietnamese Army (VC-NVA) strong-hold since the days of the French Indo-China War. My Lai is some seventy-five miles southwest of Da Nang and near the section of north-south route one which was the infamous "Street Without Joy" of the French era.

March, 1968, witnessed the continuance of the most widespread and sustained enemy offensive of the war (the "TET" offensive.)

Company C had recently suffered heavy casualties in the Song My area on two previous occasions. Their mission on this operation was to "search the area for enemy personnel, war materials, including caches of food, and enemy sympathizers and to capture all individuals, confiscate all materials, and destroy all buildings which might be of potential value to the enemy."

In the case of armed resistance, the American unit was required to engage and destroy all opposition unless that opposition voluntarily surrendered. (In a combat situation, it is exceedingly difficult to determine whom, if anyone, wishes to surrender; in a fire-fight, only the foolish would attempt to make this determination.)

The village and the landing-zone (for the assault helicopters) were "prepped" by an American air strike. This mission and the air strike could only have been ordered for an objective located in a "free-fire zone". Final approval of "all" free-fire zones comes from the appropriate commander of the Army of the Republic of Viet Nam (ARVN) unit in charge of that area.

In the case of My Lai and Song My District, final approval would come from ARVN I Corps (there are four Corps Tactical Zones in RVN) Headquarters, commanded by a

Vietnamese lieutenant general. The American forces were conducting a tactical operation with the approval of and, probably, at the request of the ARVN Corps Commander.

In a free-fire zone, the civilian population is repeatedly warned via psychological warfare operations (aerial and ground loud-speaker broadcasts and leaflet distribution) to leave the area, to seek government protection provided refugees, and that, should they remain in the area, they will be considered to be enemies of the Government of Viet Nam (GVN).

Second, in view of the circumstances of the conduct of the operation, that the village was subjected to aerial bombardment and strafing and that Charley Company did receive hostile fire from the village immediately after insertion, it would be virtually impossible to determine the number of "innocent" civilians killed by the air attack and the company's combat assault.

It is significant that official GVN sources have labeled the allegations "Viet Cong propaganda." Granted, the GVN is aware of its ultimate responsibility as the approving authority of a free-fire zone, but GVN officials have not made a practice of trying to save the American forces from embarrassment in the past.

It is an ancient ploy of insurgents to blame the opposition for their own actions, especially in an area where the popular sentiment is sympathetic to their cause. Lest the American public and the world forget, at the same time that the My Lai operation occurred, the VC-NVA were slaughtering, by admission, some two thousand civilians in the ancient capital of Hue.

Numerous other incidents of VC-NVA atrocities have occurred throughout Viet Nam. Was My Lai unique? Why did American boys murder civilians in cold blood there and nowhere else. Or was the "massacre" the product of the age-old soldier tendency to hyperbole once the battle is won—the G. I. "war story"?

Also significant is the fact that the American government pays the family of each Vietnamese civilian killed accidentally by American forces a death gratuity which frequently is in excess of \$12,000, a vast fortune by Vietnamese economic standards. Naturally, when interviewed, it behooves the surviving relatives to declare that their loved ones were killed by the Americans. There is no record of a death gratuity being paid by the Viet Cong or NVA.

A third area for consideration in an evaluation of the "Pinkville" case concerns the final disposition of the case. Once the General Court has reached a verdict, should it be established that civilians were in fact killed, either in cold blood or by accident, what are the legal precedents available to

determine where the burden of guilt lies? There are several World War II precedents in military justice which dealt swift and harsh retribution to individuals convicted of crimes, including murder and rape, against the civilian populace of enemy nations.

But, should it be concluded that the civilians were killed accidentally, it is conceivable that the "coldwar" opponents of the United States will cite the international law precedent of the Nuremberg Trials (for which there was no precedent.)

Of course, the United States will be declared a war-monger and the proponent of the murder of "innocent women and children." A parallel may be drawn to the Nazi German subordinates, convicted at Nuremberg and subsequent trials, and similar justice demanded for Lt. Calley and his men. It will be ignored by the loudest protesters that the former situation involved genocide and the latter, at worst, can only be termed homicide. In any event, the prestige of the United States throughout the world will be the greatest victim of the "Pinkville" incident.

It is unlikely that many of the outraged citizens of the world will consider, or even care, that it was the ARVN which designated My Lai as a free-fire zone; or that the VC-NVA have blamed the Free World Forces for Communist atrocities, as a propaganda stunt, on numerous previous occasions.



But Mother it's my teddy bear!

Seen in their reward winning performance as college players in "The Curious Savage" are Ed Wooten, professor of math; Sarah Tankard, professor in the nursing department and Mrs. Esther Whitaker, professor of religion.

Skydivers get club approved

By PAULINE BELL ROBINSON
Editor

Chowan has approved an Aviation and Parachute Club which already has 47 members and a written constitution.

The club will use the Halifax County Airport in Roanoke Rapids. W. B. Copenhaver of Roanoke Rapids is in charge of the flying phase and Paul C. Lewter, also of Roanoke Rapids is in charge of parachuting. Each participant is covered by insurance; however, unless the participant is under 16, no parental consent is necessary.

The jumpers are required to be members of the U. S. Parachuting Association providing them with \$10,000 policy, liability and property insurance. Persons under 21 must have parental approval and be notarized.

All members are required to sign statements releasing Chowan College from liability in event of injury or death from activities. Parents must approve the policy and sign a statement granting permission.

Billy Graham is the sponsor.

Things change: Thurston

By FRANK GRANGER

Ralph Thurston has had a longer-than-average association with Chowan College.

Ralph entered Chowan in 1963 after graduation from high school. He quit school and went to work for a semester and then returned in 1965, when he played football.

In 1966 Ralph again left Chowan. This time to enlist in the Navy for a two-year hitch. While in the Navy he served in Vietnam at Da Nang and Quan Tri. Now he's back and ready to hit the books again after almost a four-year absence.

What changes did he notice on his return? He says the most apparent are the changes made in the physical growth of the campus.

"It's hard to believe this is the same school. When I first entered Chowan we held all our classes in the gym and science building. Marks Hall wasn't even built.

"In 1963 Jones Drive wasn't built. The present walkway was used as a road then. I can't remember if West Hall was built then, but I do know the student center was in the BSU building. The annex to the cafeteria hadn't been added then.

"Of course the library wasn't built. We used the old east wing of the Columns building. Stone Hall was the music building and behind that was the old football building which they tore down.

"A lot of the new additions have just been built recently. The baseball field is new and the tennis courts are new. I don't believe the Infirmary was here then either."

Ralph is majoring in pre-education and hopes to coach football in college. He says he doesn't think the number of courses for his major has increased but that there

are more instructors and more doctors here now.

"I may be wrong, but I think there were just as many students back then. We had a lot of day students. I was amazed that they had a place to teach them all."

He says it is hard to compare the amount of school spirit then and now. "We always had a lot of students follow us on football trips. I think the win-loss records are about the same.

"I think I would be hissed in my opinion, but I don't think the student body is as friendly as it was in 1963. Maybe it is because of my age and I don't fit in as I did then. I guess I don't have as much in common with the rest of the students now.

"The most striking change is the attitude of the administration toward the students. When I was here before a student couldn't drink off campus or even at home. Now they seem to be getting more liberal.

"We couldn't dance on campus then either, but we did have "socials" off campus. I remember some real good concerts we had back then. We had the "Four Seasons" twice!"

Ralph didn't think there were many things that hadn't changed, but Murfreesboro hadn't. "I can still remember seeing some of the same people in town. The only new buildings I can see are the Pub and Belk Tyler's.

"Mr. Marable and some students are still here. I don't think the girls rules have changed much since 1963," he said.

Ralph is the son of Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Thurston of Richmond, Va. and is head resident of the Superintendents Barracks.

Girls' volleyball is summarized

By JULIE HOSKINS

The Chowan College Varsity Girls Volleyball Team competed with N. C. Wesleyan College, University of North Carolina, Campbell College, and East Carolina University and ended the season with two wins and two losses.

The Junior Varsity matched the season's standings of the Varsity with two wins and two losses.

High scorer for the Varsity team was Karen Lynch with 32 points for the season, averaging 8 points per match and 3 points per game.

High scorer for the Junior Varsity was Lorraine Brinkley with 22 points for the season, averaging 5 1/2 points per match and 3 points per game.

The Varsity team consisted of co-captains Karen Lynch and Diane Williams, and members Dee Shumaker, Jeannie Gay, Gayle Morris, Deborah Dawson, Susan Long, and Joy Carroll.

The Junior Varsity members were Jean Massey, Mariam Walters, Lorraine Brinkley, Earline Brown, Betty Hurdle, Pat Crosby, Jenny Wong, and Martha Casilear.

Manager for the team was Arnette Cahoon.

Basketball squad for girls named

By JULIE HOSKINS

Members of the Girls Varsity Basketball Squad have been announced.

They are Karen Lynch and Diane Williams, co-captains, Vicki Gilbert, Jeannie Gay, Deborah Dawson, Amy Wynn, Susan Long, Gail Morris, Irene Flynn, Martha Dodd and Gloria Simon.

The manager is Arnette Cahoon.

Writer needed

There is no sports coverage in this issue of Smoke Signals for the sports writer resigned. Anyone interested in writing sports for the paper please contact Pauline Robinson at graphic arts.

Lawrence Speaks

Mr. Lawrence, Pastor of Forest Hills Baptist Church, Raleigh, North Carolina, and President of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention, brought a message to the Spring Convocation of Chowan College on the subject "Onward Into The Seventies."

After describing the potential of the marvelous future which lies ahead of the world, he asked the question "What of your future as an individual as you adjust to this marvelous new world?" He then focused attention upon the needs of the individual and upon the principles which in all ages have contributed to successful and fruitful living.

These principles he enumerated as: first, a well-defined purpose for living. In this connection he made the observation that today in our age of affluence, most of us have plenty to live "with" but nothing to live "for." He added—in the second place—that our purpose must be worthy enough to liberate the best within us and must be within the context of a worthy sense of values. He underscored the truth that the only purpose worthy of a Christian is to seek and to do the will of God in service for humanity.



Lee Dunn, Pete Sykes, Bucky Griffin prepare signs



Ready for 'Birth defects' protest march

Students stage riot for 'Dimes'

Chowan College students were in a "fighting" mood Thursday as they marched around campus and bashed in cars.

However, there was no need to call out the State Police as the students were demonstrating to show their support of the March of Dimes Campaign to fight birth defects.

Activities included the march, "car bash" and social hour were scheduled through the combined efforts of Chowan's Student Government Association and co-chairmen for the Hertford County March of Dimes campaign, Charles Helms and Bill Sowell. Both are Chowan professors.

The march began at 3 p.m. from in front of Thomas Cafeteria. After proceeding around Jones Drive, the students continued to the practice football field, site of the "car bash."

Located on the field were several wrecked cars with names of professors painted on the cars. For each 10 cent contribution to the March of Dimes, a student was given the opportunity to smash a car with a sledgehammer. A quarter purchased three bashes.

Helms said, "The students wanted to show their concern in the fight against birth defects and their willingness to help publicize the campaign through the march and other activities is commendable."

Helms said that Lee Dunn, president of the SGA, arranged for the social hour following the "car bash" in the gymnasium. A band was featured.

Helms had "big pot" on hand for contributions.



Tommy Hoggard awaits march