

PEERS COMMISSION

Training of 11th Brigade

1970

After listening to the My Lai participants describe the training they had received in the rules of land warfare and the treatment of noncombatants, Peers investigators concluded that the Americal Division and its 11th Brigade had been so hastily assembled in 1967 that proper training had not taken place.

Lack of Emphasis in Training

Early in the Inquiry, there was a suspicion that the manner in which the 11th Brigade was activated, trained, prepared for overseas movement, and deployed to Vietnam might have had some impact upon the events of Son My. Investigation revealed that this was the case to a limited extent.

11th Brigade elements underwent an accelerated training program, received a substantial input of replacement personnel shortly before deploying, and eventually deployed earlier than originally had been scheduled. Shortly after arriving in Vietnam, planned makeup training was effected by another infusion of replacements (to overcome a projected rotation "hump") and by early commitment of brigade elements to active combat operations.

As a net result of these actions, the evidence indicates that, at best, the soldiers of TF Barker had received only marginal training in several key areas prior to the Son My operation. These areas were (1) provisions of the Geneva Conventions, (2) handling and safeguarding of noncombatants, and (3) rules of engagement.

The problem of training and instruction having to do with identification of and response to "illegal" orders is addressed elsewhere in this report. The evidence indicates that training deficiencies in this area, together with deficiencies in those training areas described above, played a significant part in the Son My operation.