

**The My Lai Massacre: the Tragedy and its Triumphs**

Rena Liu

Senior Division

Historical Paper

Paper Length: 2,498 words

As the Vietnam War raged in 1968, American soldiers killed 407<sup>1</sup> Vietnamese civilians in the hamlet of My Lai. The atrocities committed were immediately covered up by the US military and not brought to light until 1969, when a freelance journalist exposed the massacre and its coverup. As the My Lai story developed through consequent court-martials and investigations, the massacre and its aftermath grew to become symbolic of American involvement in Vietnam<sup>2</sup>, revealing the brutal reality of the conflict and laying bare<sup>3</sup> the corruption present in American institutions. Because of My Lai, public opinion shifted toward favoring withdrawal from Vietnam while the military was galvanized to reexamine itself and reform.

Though the My Lai massacre eventually faded from the headlines, its legacy continues to affect its victims and shape America. In Vietnam, the scars of the war and its brutality remain, while in the US, American trust in its institutions has been irreversibly eroded. However, because of the action taken in the wake of tragedy, My Lai also has a legacy of triumph. My Lai demonstrated the critical function of journalism, directly influenced the US military's present-day ethics, and served and continues to serve as a potent warning of the consequences of poorly waged war and institutional failure.

## Setting

---

<sup>1</sup> Hersh, Seymour M. "Scene of the Crime"  
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/03/30/the-scene-of-the-crime>. Accessed 5 Jan. 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Levesque, Christopher J. "The Truth Behind My Lai". *New York Times*, 16 Mar. 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Jones, Howard. *My Lai: Vietnam, 1968, and the Descent into Darkness*. New York, Oxford University Press, 2017, 3.

United States involvement in Vietnam was a “gradual process”<sup>4</sup> that began during Vietnam’s struggle for independence and escalated to the Vietnam War. After winning independence, Vietnam was split into a US-backed south and a Communist north, which fought to unify the nation. The conflagration worsened when the NLF, known commonly and derogatorily as the Viet Cong<sup>5</sup>, was established with the goal of toppling the southern regime. The mix of global superpower, small nation, and rebel group set up a conflict that the US did not understand<sup>6</sup> how to fight. From the beginning, US involvement in Vietnam was unsuited to the conflict, creating a messy war and a canvas for atrocity.

In order to combat the powerful US, North Vietnam waged a guerilla war. American soldiers sent to the jungles of Vietnam were “massacred and mauled by an enemy...[they] couldn’t see...couldn’t feel and...couldn’t touch”<sup>7</sup>, causing soldiers to feel frustration and paranoia and crave opportunities to retaliate<sup>8</sup>. This condition was worsened by the NLF, who, in addition to employing guerilla tactics, mingled with civilians, making it impossible for American soldiers to distinguish between friend and foe<sup>9</sup>. Soldiers were thus distrustful of the local Vietnamese populations to the point where “*all* Vietnamese were Viet Cong”<sup>10</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> Stur, Heather. “Why the United States Went to War in Vietnam” <https://www.fpri.org/article/2017/04/united-states-went-war-vietnam/> . Accessed 4 Jan. 2019.

<sup>5</sup> “The Vietnam War: An Overview” <https://vietnam.vassar.edu/overview/> . Accessed 26 Dec. 2018.

<sup>6</sup> Herring, George C. “How to Not Win ‘Hearts and Minds’.” *New York Times*, 19 Sept. 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/19/opinion/vietnam-war-americans-culture.html>. Accessed 9 May 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Raviv, Shaun. “The Ghosts of My Lai.” *Smithsonian Magazine*, Jan. 2018.

<sup>8</sup> *My Lai*, Directed by Barak Goodman, WGBH Educational Foundation, 2010.

<sup>9</sup> “Remember My Lai.” *Frontline*, produced by Kevin Sim and Michael Bilton, PBS-TV, 1989.

<sup>10</sup> Jones, Howard. *My Lai: Vietnam, 1968, and the Descent into Darkness*. New York, Oxford University Press, 2017, 34.

To exacerbate the tense atmosphere, in Vietnam, racism was rampant; body counts were used to assess military progress; free-fire zones were common; and though soldiers were required to study military law and procedures such as the Geneva Conventions and how to report a war crime, there was “disturbing evidence that the training of enlisted personnel in these subjects was minimal”<sup>11</sup>. An American soldier in a free-fire zone, which effectively became areas soldiers could “shoot anything that moved”<sup>12</sup>, paranoid of an invisible enemy and craving confrontation, could easily brutalize a slightly suspicious “gook”<sup>13</sup>. If considered a crime, even in a free-fire zone, assaults on the Vietnamese would often remain unreported because soldiers were not trained to do so, and because if deaths occurred, they could be claimed to be of enemy affiliates to boost body counts<sup>14</sup> and demonstrate progress. Predictably, small acts of brutality against civilians became common. Eventually, this festering environment capable of fostering brutality would allow and mask atrocity.

## **My Lai**

On March 15, 1968, Captain Ernest Medina briefed the men of Charlie Company on their upcoming mission: to destroy the NLF battalion that was in the area and, according to intelligence, almost certainly sheltered in the hamlet of My Lai. The hamlet, effectively a free-fire zone<sup>15</sup>, was also to be razed<sup>16</sup> to ensure the annihilation of resistance and destruction of

---

<sup>11</sup> “Investigation of the My Lai Incident”

[https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military\\_Law/pdf/MyLaiReport.pdf](https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/MyLaiReport.pdf) . Accessed 2 Jan. 2019.

<sup>12</sup>Nelson, Deborah. *The War Behind Me*, New York: Basic Books, 2008, 102.

<sup>13</sup> Derogatory term for a Vietnamese person commonly used by American soldiers in Vietnam.

<sup>14</sup> Hersh, Seymour. *My Lai 4: a Report on the Massacre and Its Aftermath*, New York: Random House Inc., 1970, 32-33.

<sup>15</sup> Jones, Howard. *My Lai: Vietnam, 1968, and the Descent into Darkness*. New York, Oxford University Press, 2017, 40.

possible enemy assets. Troops were informed that any innocuous civilians would have left the hamlet, so anyone remaining was considered NLF or an NLF sympathizer<sup>17</sup>.

With “no significant deviation from the average...company”<sup>18</sup>, Charlie Company embodied most soldiers in Vietnam. They had lost comrades to guerillas and had begun acting on their fear and frustration by brutalizing civilians, which Captain Medina tolerated<sup>19</sup>. In their upcoming mission, the company was told to be aggressive. One reason was to “get revenge”<sup>20</sup> for their casualties, but another was so that a higher body count could be accumulated, which would demonstrate the effectiveness of the high-ranking officers in control of Charlie Company’s division, many of whom were vying for a promotion.

On the morning of March 16, the three platoons of Charlie Company embarked on their mission fully believing they would confront the NLF. As the soldiers landed outside the hamlet, they immediately began blindly shooting any area the battalion could be hiding. Upon entering My Lai, soldiers continued shooting. Even as it became clear that the NLF battalion was not present and that the hamlet inhabitants were benign, the men were firmly under the impression that the inhabitants were NLF affiliates they had orders to kill.

Likely as the result of this conviction and the festering circumstances of the Vietnam War, the actions of the men of Charlie Company went beyond the boundaries of military law and

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 39.

<sup>17</sup> “Charlie Company and the Massacre.” *American Experience*, WGBH Educational Foundation, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/my-lai-charlie-company-and-massacre/>. Accessed 28 Dec. 2018.

<sup>18</sup> United States, Department of the Army. *Review of the Preliminary Investigations into the My Lai Incident: Volume 1, Report of the Investigation*, Government Printing Office, 2014. [www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military\\_Law/pdf/RDAR-Vol-I.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RDAR-Vol-I.pdf). 4-9.

<sup>19</sup> Levesque, Christopher J. “The Truth Behind My Lai”. *New York Times*, 16 Mar. 2018.

<sup>20</sup> Bilton, Michael and Kevin Sims. *Four Hours in My Lai*. New York: Penguin Group, 1992, 48.

human morality. My Lai literally burned into a hellscape as soldiers set fire to homes<sup>21</sup>, brutally assaulted women and girls<sup>22</sup>, and butchered livestock<sup>23</sup> and people, from infants to old men, indiscriminately<sup>24</sup>. A Charlie Company soldier summarized the mission saying, “We met no resistance...We had no casualties. It was just [a village of]...old papa-sans, women, and kids”<sup>25</sup>, and American soldiers had committed atrocities.

### Cover-up

Almost immediately, the incident at My Lai began to be covered up. Battle statistics were manipulated the morning of the incident<sup>26</sup>, and by the early afternoon of that day, official reports stated that 128 NLF had been killed, a number made questionable by the disproportionate reported three weapons captured<sup>27</sup>. Army public information offices edited a combat correspondent’s report of the massacre<sup>28</sup> listing the NLF casualties and a successfully executed mission for the press, and the “victory” at My Lai was reported by major papers on March 17<sup>29</sup>.

---

<sup>21</sup> Hersh, Seymour. *My Lai 4: a Report on the Massacre and Its Aftermath*, New York: Random House Inc., 1970, 52.

<sup>22</sup> Ward and Burns. *The Vietnam war: an intimate history*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017, 432

<sup>23</sup> United States Department of the Army. *Review of the Preliminary Investigations into the My Lai Incident*. [https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military\\_Law/pdf/RDAR-Vol-I.pdf](https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RDAR-Vol-I.pdf) . 2-3

<sup>24</sup> United States Department of the Army. *Review of the Preliminary Investigations into the My Lai Incident*. [https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military\\_Law/pdf/RDAR-Vol-I.pdf](https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RDAR-Vol-I.pdf)., 2-2.

<sup>25</sup> Hersh, Seymour. *My Lai 4: a Report on the Massacre and Its Aftermath*, New York: Random House Inc., 1970, 74.

<sup>26</sup> Hersh, Seymour. *Cover-up*. New York: Random House, Inc., 1972. Chapter 8.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, Chapter 9.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, Chapter 9.

<sup>29</sup> “G.I.’s, in Pincer Move, Kill 128 in a Daylong Battle; 128 OF FOE KILLED IN FIGHT ON COAST”. <https://www.nytimes.com/1968/03/17/archives/gis-in-pincer-move-kill-128-in-a-daylong-battle-128-of-foe-killed.html> . Accessed 5 Jan 2019.

Nonetheless, reports and accusations of a massacre began to surface among soldiers. Investigations were conducted that disproved reports of a massacre, but an official army panel later found that they were “little more than a pretense and [that] was subsequently misrepresented as a thorough investigation...to conceal...the true enormity of the atrocities”<sup>30</sup>. In addition to inadequate investigations, later attempts to locate records on My Lai found that almost all “...the reports and documents dealing with My Lai 4 [My Lai] and its aftermath...which should have been on file...had vanished”<sup>31</sup>.

As later investigations would reveal<sup>32</sup>, the officers depending on My Lai’s success to aid them to promotions were keenly involved in covering up a poor reflection on their leadership. Thus, in the wake of the massacre, the coverup of My Lai added another dimension to its tragedy: while the My Lai massacre demonstrated the consequences of the Vietnam War, its cover-up revealed the corruption of the American institutions involved.

In painful contrast to the American cover-up, information concerning the events at My Lai was widely available to Vietnamese officials just days after the incident but was not shared. In Vietnam, Americans were the dominant force. Because American officials would have taken a Vietnamese report alleging American atrocities extremely poorly, many Vietnamese officials hid their knowledge<sup>33</sup>, feeling “a natural reluctance to confront their American counterparts with

---

<sup>30</sup> “Summary of Peers Report”

[http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active\\_learning/explorations/vietnam/peers\\_report.cfm](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/vietnam/peers_report.cfm).

Accessed 5 Jan. 2019.

<sup>31</sup> Hersh, Seymour. *Cover-up*. New York: Random House, Inc., 1972. Chapter 12.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, Chapter 11.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, Chapter 14.

such serious allegations and to insist upon inquiry into the matter”<sup>34</sup>. Due to this lack of cooperation and the Army cover-up, the My Lai Massacre remained a tragedy in the dark.

### **Into the Light**

After hearing eyewitness accounts of slaughter in My Lai, former soldier Ron Ridenhour became convinced that “something very black indeed”<sup>35</sup> had occurred in the hamlet and became intent on instigating an investigation<sup>36</sup> into My Lai. In 1969, Ridenhour sent letters to multiple government officials and offices detailing what he had discovered, and the military began an inquiry into his allegations.

As witness after witness testified to the inquiry that a massacre of drastic proportions had indeed occurred, it became apparent that “if they don’t prosecute someone for this, the Army’s [was] going to get clobbered”<sup>37</sup>; so charges were quickly pressed against Lieutenant William Calley, who had been identified to have played a significant role in the massacre. Information relating to Calley’s charges was released to the press; but the release did not relate the scope nor circumstance of Calley’s charges, and, as the military intended, the public took little notice<sup>38</sup>. This would change.

---

<sup>34</sup> “Summary of Peers Report”

[http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active\\_learning/explorations/vietnam/peers\\_report.cfm](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/vietnam/peers_report.cfm). Accessed 5 Jan. 2019.

<sup>35</sup> Ridenhour, Ron. “Ridenhour Letter”

[http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active\\_learning/explorations/vietnam/ridenhour\\_letter.cfm](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/vietnam/ridenhour_letter.cfm). Accessed 26 Dec. 2018.

<sup>36</sup> “Charlie Company and the Massacre”

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/my-lai-charlie-company-and-massacre/>. Accessed 28 Dec. 2018.

<sup>37</sup> Hersh, Seymour, *My Lai 4: a Report on the Massacre and Its Aftermath*, New York: Random House Inc., 1970, 123.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 128.

In 1969, Seymour Hersh, an American freelance journalist known to be anti-war, received a tip that “the army was in the process of court-martialing a GI [an American soldier]...for the killing of seventy-five civilians in South Vietnam”<sup>39</sup>. Hersh decided to pursue the tip and, if proven true, expose the massacre. After conducting extensive research, Hersh reached the same conclusions as the army inquiry, and after fact-checking his story with Lieutenant Calley’s lawyer<sup>40</sup>, sought to publish it. Though Hersh was against the war, when searching for a publisher, he was adamant that he would not allow “even one paragraph of that smacked antiwar dicta pollute the straightforward report of a mass murder”<sup>41</sup>. Ultimately published by a small publisher then sold to major newspapers<sup>42</sup>, the story’s initial impact was disheartening as skepticism was the public’s prevalent reaction.

The tide turned after Hersh obtained a series of pivotal interviews<sup>43</sup> from members of Charlie Company who exposed, in graphic detail, the scope of the atrocities at My Lai. Hersh’s new “front page story for the world”<sup>44</sup> was featured on major television and newspapers and won My Lai the publicity to become incredibly influential<sup>45</sup>. Hersh’s work was “an exposé, but not of the men of Charlie Company. Something much more important is [was] being put to light”<sup>46</sup>.

## Reaction

---

<sup>39</sup> Hersh, Seymour. *Reporter: a memoir*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2018, 101.

<sup>40</sup> Hersh, Seymour, *Reporter: a memoir*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2018, 122.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 123.

<sup>42</sup> Ward and Burns. *The Vietnam war: an intimate history*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017, 431.

<sup>43</sup> Hersh, Seymour. *Reporter: a memoir*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2018, 127-133.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 132.

<sup>45</sup> Hersh, Seymour, *My Lai 4: a Report on the Massacre and Its Aftermath*, New York: Random House Inc., 1970, 141.

<sup>46</sup> Hersh, Seymour, *Reporter: a memoir*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2018, 135.

At the time of the exposé in 1969, Richard Nixon had taken office promising to end the war, but the nation was still starkly divided on Vietnam. Because of this environment, public response to My Lai was mixed: while both pro and anti-war groups denounced the massacre, pro-war groups labeled it an aberration and anti-war groups used it as a reflection on the war<sup>47</sup>. Despite the public sensation and division as factions fought and the media published graphic photos [Appendix A] and interviews, serious questions were raised about the “morality of US policy”<sup>48</sup> in Vietnam; the conduct and ethics of the military; and institutional integrity. My Lai demonstrated to the public that Vietnam was a breeding ground for brutality, that America was capable of committing atrocities, and that its institutions were able to cover them up. As the public saw the grim reality of the Vietnam War and questioned what else was obscured about US involvement, trust in US institutions and support for the war inevitably dwindled<sup>49</sup>.

After My Lai’s exposé, a panel led by General William Peers was assembled<sup>50</sup> to look into “the nature and scope”<sup>51</sup> of the original My Lai investigations. After compiling volumes of material<sup>52</sup>, the Peers Panel’s findings that mass murder and a cover-up had occurred resulted in charges being pressed against 14 men. After extensive trials, however, only Lieutenant Calley

---

<sup>47</sup> Hersh, Seymour, *My Lai 4: a Report on the Massacre and Its Aftermath*, New York: Random House Inc., 1970, 159-169.

<sup>48</sup> Lawrence, *The Vietnam War: a Concise International History*, New York, 2008, Oxford University Press, 149.

<sup>49</sup> *HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES-Tuesday, February 8, 1972*.

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-CRECB-1972-pt3/pdf/GPO-CRECB-1972-pt3-4-2.pdf>. Accessed 2 Jan. 2019, 3254.

<sup>50</sup> Ward and Burns. *The Vietnam war: an intimate history*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017, 437.

<sup>51</sup> United States Department of the Army. *Review of the Preliminary Investigations into the My Lai Incident*. [https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military\\_Law/pdf/RDAR-Vol-I.pdf](https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RDAR-Vol-I.pdf) . Accessed 26 December 2018, 1-1.

<sup>52</sup> “Peers Inquiry.” *Military Legal Resources*,

[https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military\\_Law/Peers\\_inquiry.html](https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/Peers_inquiry.html). Accessed 4 Jan. 2019.

was convicted<sup>53</sup>. Though some saw his conviction as fair and the 13 acquittals as failures of the military court system, 79% of Americans disagreed with the verdict<sup>54</sup>, and Calley became widely seen as the military's scapegoat [Appendix B] and hailed as a hero. The overwhelming anger at authorities blaming ordinary soldiers for institutional mismanagement of the Vietnam War caused further public disillusionment at US involvement in the conflict<sup>55</sup>.

## Legacy

After the initial furor surrounding the massacre and its aftermath, the eventual triumphs of My Lai began to show. The most visible is My Lai's establishment of a clear example of the consequences of poorly waged war. In 1991, the commander of a mission targeting Saddam Hussein's forces warned his troops, "No My Lais in this division—do you hear me?"<sup>56</sup>. Another use of the "cautionary tale"<sup>57</sup> of My Lai and the Vietnam War was in the 2000s, where parallels were drawn between US involvement in Vietnam and Iraq. The occurrence of abuse and brutality against civilians in the Iraq War<sup>58</sup>, however, showed that "government and military leaders had forgotten the lessons from Vietnam"<sup>59</sup>. Taken in perspective of My Lai's role as "cautionary

---

<sup>53</sup> DK Smithsonian. *The Vietnam War: the Definitive Illustrated History*. New York: DK Publishing, 2017, 247.

<sup>54</sup> Ward and Burns. *The Vietnam war: an intimate history*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017, 472.

<sup>55</sup> Fish, Eric. "Descent Into Darkness: Looking Back at the My Lai Massacre" <https://asiasociety.org/blog/asia/descent-darkness-looking-back-my-lai-massacre>. Accessed 20 Nov. 2018.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> "Atrocities and Criminal Homicides in Iraq." *Global Policy Forum*, [www.globalpolicy.org/invasion-and-war/atrocities-and-criminal-homicides-.html](http://www.globalpolicy.org/invasion-and-war/atrocities-and-criminal-homicides-.html). Accessed 10 May 2019.

<sup>59</sup> Nelson, Deborah. *The War Behind Me*, New York: Basic Books, 2008, 181.

tale”<sup>60</sup>, these incidents not only demonstrated the inevitable repetition of similar tragedy if My Lai is forgotten but also My Lai’s power in deterring tragedy if remembered.

Another important triumph of My Lai was army reform. “As a direct result of a commitment to prevent another My Lai...leaders in the Army have made important changes to both the Army’s culture and organization”<sup>61</sup>, including a heightened emphasis on “professional ethics and values”<sup>62</sup> drawn directly from the Peers Panel’s conclusions on My Lai<sup>63</sup> and initiatives for precautions to ensure all operations are planned and conducted in compliance with military law<sup>64</sup>.

One of My Lai’s less visible but most important triumphs was its demonstration of the importance of journalism. Out of the many atrocities of its kind committed in the Vietnam War, only My Lai gripped the attention needed to initiate change because of its public exposé and media coverage. Without the public pressure resulting from the media exposition of the massacre, My Lai would have been forgotten and the critical conversations and reform it instigated would be nonexistent. Objective journalism brings truth to the public; and once people can know, they can take action. Due to this vital function, journalism was able to bring My Lai to justice, and the importance of allowing the public to know has in no way diminished since then.

---

<sup>60</sup> Borch, Fred L. ““What Really Happened on 16 March 1968? What Lessons Have Been Learned? A Look at the My Lai Incident Fifty Years Later”. <https://armyhistory.org/my-lai/>. Accessed 26 Dec. 2018.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Reilly, Robert. “The Inclination for War Crimes.” *Military Review*, May-Jun. 2009, 52-58.

<sup>64</sup> Borch, Fred L. ““What Really Happened on 16 March 1968? What Lessons Have Been Learned? A Look at the My Lai Incident Fifty Years Later”. <https://armyhistory.org/my-lai/>. Accessed 26 Dec. 2018.

Despite the triumphs in My Lai's legacy, tragedy remains that impacts both the US and Vietnam. In the US, the permanent loss of innocence experienced by the American people remains tragic, while in My Lai today, survivors have not forgotten the massacre. Many are unable to forgive and still bear the scars of lost homes, livelihoods, and loved ones<sup>65</sup>. Similarly, the entire nation of Vietnam bears the scars of America's botched involvement, from ravaged lands<sup>66</sup> to the estimated two million civilians killed<sup>67</sup>, many by small massacres and other acts of brutality.

From the ashes of unimaginable atrocities committed in a small Vietnamese hamlet, My Lai shook the conscience of a global superpower and became a defining moment of the Vietnam era. After its exposition through journalism, My Lai was able to reveal the festering underbelly of the Vietnam War, lead directly to reform, and provide a powerful antithesis for military action for generations to come. Though the scars of My Lai have not faded in the minds of its survivors and the nation it transformed, they endure to shape America and the world and to ensure that My Lai's greatest triumph will be the commitment of its tragedy to exist only in history and the memory of the past.

---

<sup>65</sup> "Remember My Lai." *Frontline*, produced by Kevin Sim and Michael Bilton, PBS-TV, 1989.

<sup>66</sup> "The War's Effect on the Vietnamese Land and People." Vietnam War Reference Library.

*Encyclopedia.com*. 2001,

<https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/wars-effect-vietnamese-land-and-people>. Accessed 10 May. 2019.

<sup>67</sup> Spector, Ronald H. "Vietnam War" *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14 Nov. 2018, [www.britannica.com/event/Vietnam-War](http://www.britannica.com/event/Vietnam-War). Accessed 23 Dec. 2018.

## Appendix A:

**1st Photos of Viet Mass Slaying**

**WEATHER**  
Snow barriers and  
colder today.  
High in the upper 20s.  
Details on Page 3-C.

**THE PLAIN DEALER**

**FINAL**  
Stocks & Races  
Dow-Jones off 5.21

OHIO'S LARGEST NEWSPAPER

CLEVELAND, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1969

128TH YEAR—NO. 324

\* \* \* \* \*

96 PAGES 10 CENTS



A clump of bodies on a road in South Vietnam.

**Exclusive**

This photograph will shock Americans as it shocked the editors and the staff of The Plain Dealer. It was taken by a young Cleveland area man while serving as a photographer with the U.S. Army in South Vietnam.

It was taken during the attack by American soldiers on the South Vietnamese village My Lai, an attack which has made world headlines in recent days with disclosures of mass killings allegedly at the hands of American soldiers.

This photograph and others on two special pages are the first to be published anywhere of the killings.

This particular picture shows a clump of bodies of South Vietnamese civilians which includes women and children. Why they were killed raises one of the most momentous questions of the war in Vietnam.

## **Cameraman Saw GIs Slay 100 Villagers**

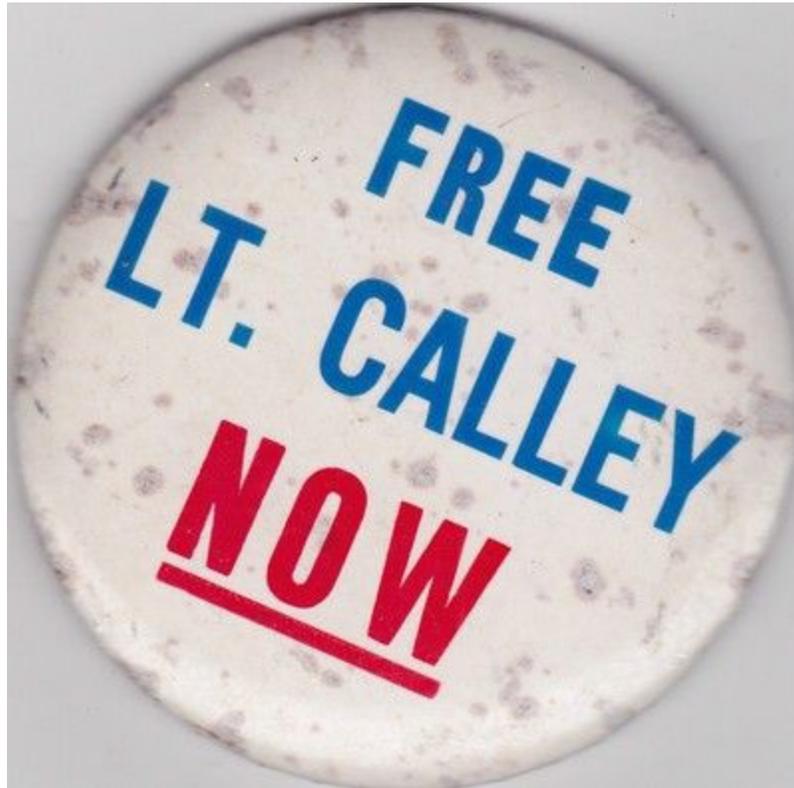
By JOSEPH ESZTERHAS  
(4) 1969, The Plain Dealer

This photograph is of a front page of *The Plain Dealer* published shortly after the exposition of the My Lai massacre. The paper was the first to publish a collection of private images taken by Ronald Haeberle, an Army photographer, of the My Lai massacre that aided in deeply horrifying the public and providing concrete, graphic evidence forcing government and military action.

“The Plain Dealer front page on Nov. 20, 1969.” *The Plain Dealer Library*, Haeberle, Ronald, Advance Local

Media LLC, 21 Sept. 2017,

[https://www.cleveland.com/plain-dealer-library/index.ssf/2009/11/plain\\_dealer\\_exclusive\\_my\\_lai\\_massacre\\_photos\\_by\\_ronald\\_haeberle.htm](https://www.cleveland.com/plain-dealer-library/index.ssf/2009/11/plain_dealer_exclusive_my_lai_massacre_photos_by_ronald_haeberle.htm). Accessed 30 Dec. 2018.

**Appendix B:**

A 1970s button (despite being titled as from the 1960's—the website description corrects this inaccuracy), protesting the conviction of Lieutenant Calley. This button, one out of a variety of pro-Calley paraphernalia, demonstrated the anger of many who felt that Calley's conviction was unjust. The commonness of these items reflects on a general feeling of anger at government injustice following Calley's conviction.

“60'S VIETNAM CONSERVATIVE CAUSE PROTEST FREE LT CALLEY NOW BUTTON PINBACK BADGE.” *WorthPoint*, WorthPoint Corporation, <https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/60s-vietnam-conservative-cause-456036041>.

Accessed 30 Dec. 2018.

## Annotated Bibliography

### Primary Sources:

Bilton, Michael and Kevin Sims. *Four Hours in My Lai*. New York: Penguin Group, 1992.

This book covered My Lai in stunning depth and utilized many interviews conducted by the authors with people connected to My Lai (mostly the soldiers involved in the massacre and their officers). When using this source, I relied on the first-hand accounts told to and recorded by the authors to develop a better understanding of how the people connected to My Lai perceived it.

Calleja, David. "My Lai massacre survivor speaks of his survival." *ThingsAsian*, Global

Directions Inc., 11 Sept. 2010,

[asiasociety.org/blog/asia/descent-darkness-looking-back-my-lai-massacre](http://asiasociety.org/blog/asia/descent-darkness-looking-back-my-lai-massacre). Accessed 30

Nov. 2018.

This webpage contained the interview of a My Lai survivor who spoke of the incident, its impacts on him, and how he now views the soldiers that participated. It was an enlightening source on the people the atrocity was committed against and helped me understand the impact of the massacre from a different perspective, which in this case, heightened the sense of great tragedy.

"Chieu Hoi program information for the AMERICAL Division area" *Company A, 1st Battalion*,

*6th Infantry, A/1/6,*

[www.a-1-6.org/1-6th%20site/1st%20bn%206th%20inf%20web%20site%20off%20line/cdChuhoi.html](http://www.a-1-6.org/1-6th%20site/1st%20bn%206th%20inf%20web%20site%20off%20line/cdChuhoi.html). Accessed 2 Jan. 2019.

This page is from a website dedicated to the 1st Battalion Sixth Infantry that fought in the Vietnam War. The page I used included a picture and description of a military instruction card issued to soldiers in Vietnam. This primary source helped me understand exactly what some of the information soldiers in Vietnam received, and how inadequate it was.

Daniel, Aubrey M. "Aubrey Daniel Letter" *My Lai Massacre*, Baylor University,

[blogs.baylor.edu/mylaimassacre/aubrey-daniel-letter/](https://blogs.baylor.edu/mylaimassacre/aubrey-daniel-letter/). Accessed 27 Dec. 2018.

Aubrey Daniel was Calley's prosecutor and wrote this open letter to President Nixon stating his anger that Calley was being glorified and the trials were being denounced by the public. This letter provided a firsthand example of a strong opinion surrounding the trial of Lieutenant Calley, which aided my understanding of one side of public opinion of it.

"G.I.'s, in Pincer Move, Kill 128 in a Daylong Battle; 128 OF FOE KILLED IN FIGHT ON

COAST". *New York Times*, late city ed., 17 March 1968: 1,

[www.nytimes.com/1968/03/17/archives/gis-in-pincer-move-kill-128-in-a-daylong-battle-128-of-foe-killed.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1968/03/17/archives/gis-in-pincer-move-kill-128-in-a-daylong-battle-128-of-foe-killed.html). Accessed 5 Jan. 2019.

This article is from the report of the American “victory” at My Lai. This helped me understand how the mission at My Lai was first described to the public and how it was originally portrayed by the Army, who released the story to the press.

Gillespie, Mark. “Americans Look Back at Vietnam War” *Gallup*, 17 November 2000, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/2299/americans-look-back-vietnam-war.aspx>. Accessed 24 Dec. 2018.

This website provided an article on America’s modern views on Vietnam as compared to other countries, but its most helpful resource to me was a graph it provided of surveys taken throughout the Vietnam War and the decades after measuring public support of the Vietnam War. The graph helped me visualize the gradual decline in support of the Vietnam War and also identified when support began to decline. Because the graph is the only thing I truly utilized, I label it as a primary source.

Hersh, Seymour M. *Cover-up*. New York: Random House, Inc., 1972.

*Cover-up* is a later book by Seymour Hersh that is specifically on the Army cover-up of the massacre. Rich in primary accounts and Hersh’s own experiences, this book had a wealth of information that allowed me to gain a comprehensive view of the cover-up and its impact from the perspective and experience of the man who exposed it.

---. *My Lai 4: A Report on the Massacre and its Aftermath*. New York: Random House, Inc., 1970.

This book by Seymour Hersh, the journalist who first exposed the massacre, was an excellent overview of the massacre and its aftermath. The book was incredibly rich in primary accounts of the massacre and later attempts to expose it. I found it useful because it gave Hersh's own experiences in collecting information about the event. I used this book to gain a comprehensive overview of My Lai from the perspective of someone who was directly involved in its history.

---. *Reporter: a memoir*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2018.

Hersh's recently published memoir contained chapters explaining in detail Hersh's experience reporting on My Lai and contained information, thoughts, and context not accounted in his earlier books. This book helped me understand Hersh's thoughts when reporting on My Lai and the process of how he came to expose it.

Kamm, Henry. "Vietnamese Say G.I.'s Slew 567 in Town" *New York Times*, late city ed., 16

Nov. 1969: 1.

[archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0316.html#article](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0316.html#article)

[e](#) . Accessed 3 Jan. 2018.

This is an early article published detailing the My Lai massacre as published by the New York Times. Seeing how a major paper published the information after it was exposed helped me see how the massacre was portrayed to the public.

“Remember My Lai.” *Frontline*, produced by Kevin Sim and Michael Bilton, PBS-TV, 1989.

This documentary on My Lai presented the My Lai story as viewers would have seen it 30 years ago. I found it meaningful because it demonstrated how the My Lai story carried as much relevance then as it does now, and that attitudes towards it have not changed. Because I used this source to gain an understanding of how My Lai was perceived through the decades, I classify it as a primary source.

Ridenhour, Ron. “Ridenhour Letter.” 29 March 1969. Digital History. Accessed 26 December 2018.

[www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active\\_learning/explorations/vietnam/ridenhour\\_letter.cfm](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/vietnam/ridenhour_letter.cfm).

Accessed 28 Dec. 2018.

Ron Ridenhour’s original letter to United States departments and officials demonstrated his passion for exposing the massacre and his loyalty to the ideals of the United States. I used the document to see the letter led to the eventual exposition of the My Lai Massacre and to try to understand the writer behind it.

Ridenhour, Ron. "Jesus was a Gook, Part II." *The Sixties Project*, vol. 5, n.1-4, Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities, Mar. 1994, [www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML\\_docs/Texts/Narrative/Ridenhour\\_Jesus\\_02.html](http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Texts/Narrative/Ridenhour_Jesus_02.html). Accessed 5 May. 2019.

This essay written by Ron Ridenhour reflects on his experience with My Lai. It specifically covers his reflections on how the attitudes in Vietnam that factored in My Lai continue today. I found this account helpful for its candor and for Ridenhour's comparison of the Vietnam War and My Lai to American conflicts in the present (for Ridenhour writing it, 1994). However, when reading it in 2019, the patterns Ridenhour pointed out remain, demonstrating the continued unresolved tragedy of My Lai.

United Nations, "Protection of Civilian Persons" *United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect*. United Nations. 12 August 1949. PDF file. 26 December 2018. [www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.33\\_GC-IV-EN.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.33_GC-IV-EN.pdf).

This document detailing the protection of civilians is from the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect. It helped me understand what the rules of war were pertaining to civilians at the time of the My Lai massacre, which then helped me understand how terribly the rules had been broken.

United States, Congress, House of Representatives, Armed Services Investigating Subcommittee.

*Investigation of the My Lai Incident*. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970. 91st

Congress, 2nd Session, H. Res. 105,

[www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military\\_Law/pdf/MyLaiReport.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/MyLaiReport.pdf).

This report on My Lai was the result of a congressional prompt to find the answers to questions posed by the House Armed Services Committee Chairman. This document was very factual, and while I did not read it in its entirety, it offered specific information that I looked for to clarify facts.

United States, Congress, House of Representatives. *HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES-Tuesday,*

*February 8, 1972*. Government Printing Office, 1972. 92nd Congress, Congressional

Record-House,

[www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-CRECB-1972-pt3/pdf/GPO-CRECB-1972-pt3-4-2.pdf](http://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-CRECB-1972-pt3/pdf/GPO-CRECB-1972-pt3-4-2.pdf).

This record of a House of Representatives adjournment in 1972 included an address given on the My Lai incident. The addresser questioned what conclusions could be drawn from the incident and proposed measures in response to the massacre and its aftermath. There were several news articles and editorials attached which reflected on public

opinion on the incident at that time which, along with the address, I found greatly increased my understanding of the questions and conclusions people drew from the massacre in the time after its exposition. I consider this document a primary source because the included articles and editorials were specifically referred to by Congressman Stratton on February 8, 1972. I found the utilization of these specific documents beneficial in my understanding of how My Lai was portrayed to the nation, and thus this document functioned as a primary source in my research.

United States, Department of the Army. *Review of the Preliminary Investigations into the My Lai Incident: Volume I, Report of the Investigation*, Government Printing Office, 2014.  
[www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military\\_Law/pdf/RDAR-Vol-I.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RDAR-Vol-I.pdf) .

This report from the army panel that was assigned to investigate initial investigations into My Lai contained the detailed findings of the panel. I was able to use it to better understand the thoroughness of later inquiries into My Lai and to fact-check myself.

United States, Department of the Army. *Review of the Preliminary Investigations into the My Lai Incident: Volume III, Exhibits, Book Six-Photographs*. Government Printing Office, 2014. [www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military\\_Law/pdf/RDAR-Vol-IIIBook6.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RDAR-Vol-IIIBook6.pdf).

This collection of photographs, including those taken by Ronald Haeberle of the My Lai mission, provides many common photos of the soldiers but also has a section of colored

images of the massacre. The graphic, harrowing photos disturbed me as they must have also disturbed the public when they were first released. These photos helped me gain an understanding the acute level of tragedy at My Lai.

Wilson, Julian, and James M. Smith. "Battle Hymn of Lt. Calley", Shelby Singleton Music Inc. and Quickit Pub. Co, 1971, Vietnam War Song Project, [youtube.com/watch?v=4JoacW7woBY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4JoacW7woBY) .

"Battle of Hymn of Lt. Calley" is a song written portraying Calley as a patriotic soldier following orders. This song was perhaps my best source on understanding how those who defended Calley felt. Its deep passion and haunting musicality (it ironically uses some of the tune of "Battle Hymn of the Republic") powerfully conveys the feelings of the public in a way that prompts understanding past words.

Wilson, William. "I Had Prayed To God That This Thing Was Fiction..." *American Heritage*, Feb. 1990, [www.americanheritage.com/content/%E2%80%9Di-had-prayed-god-thing-was-fiction%E2%80%A6%E2%80%9D](http://www.americanheritage.com/content/%E2%80%9Di-had-prayed-god-thing-was-fiction%E2%80%A6%E2%80%9D). Accessed 29 Dec. 2018.

This is an interview with Colonel William Wilson, who led initial investigations into Ron Ridenhour's claims of a massacre, published in a magazine in 1990. The interview included many of Wilson's thoughts and opinions as he investigated the event. It was

instrumental to me in gaining an understanding of how those who investigated the massacre felt as they gradually uncovered information that horrified and shocked them more and more.

### **Secondary Sources:**

“Atrocities and Criminal Homicides in Iraq.” *Global Policy Forum*,

[www.globalpolicy.org/invasion-and-war/atrocities-and-criminal-homicides-.html](http://www.globalpolicy.org/invasion-and-war/atrocities-and-criminal-homicides-.html).

Accessed 10 May 2019.

This website provided articles describing American war crimes in Iraq. It helped me gain a better understanding of the parallels of violence in Vietnam and Iraq, including abuse and brutality against civilians.

Borch, Fred L. ““What Really Happened on 16 March 1968? What Lessons Have Been Learned?

A Look at the My Lai Incident Fifty Years Later.” *Armyhistory.org*, Army Historical Foundation, 4 May 2018. [armyhistory.org/my-lai/](http://armyhistory.org/my-lai/). Accessed 23 Dec. 2018.

This site, dedicated to the official campaign for a national museum for the US Army, contained an article on My Lai and its impact on the Army. Its information, especially on army reform as a result of the My Lai massacre, enhanced my comprehension of how the Army was affected by the massacre.

Brosnahan, Cori. "Music of My Lai" *American Experience*, WGBH Educational Foundation, March 2018, [www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/my-lai-music-of-my-lai/](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/my-lai-music-of-my-lai/).

Accessed 5 Jan. 2018.

This webpage was an article on musical expression in response to My Lai. Through its links and listed songs, I was able to better understand the intensity of public opinion concerning My Lai.

Burkeman, Olivia. "Scoop" *The Guardian Books*, Guardian News and Media Limited, 8 Oct. 2004, [www.theguardian.com/books/2004/oct/09/pulitzerprize.awardsandprizes#top](http://www.theguardian.com/books/2004/oct/09/pulitzerprize.awardsandprizes#top). Accessed 4 Jan. 2018.

This overview of Seymour Hersh's work and life up until 2004 provided information on his background and journalistic triumphs. I found it useful to see a version of Hersh's reporting My Lai that had not been written by him, though the article did corroborate everything he wrote.

"Charlie Company and the Massacre." *American Experience*, WGBH Educational Foundation, [www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/my-lai-charlie-company-and-massacre/](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/my-lai-charlie-company-and-massacre/).

Accessed 28 Dec. 2018.

This webpage provided a timeline of the massacre and its aftermath. The timeline was incredibly helpful in helping me create a visualization of the course of events.

DK Smithsonian. *The Vietnam War: the Definitive Illustrated History*. New York: DK Publishing, 2017.

This book covered the entire Vietnam War and was filled with images and additional information on certain topics. Its overview of My Lai helped me gain a general understanding of the massacre and its impacts.

Fish, Eric. “Descent Into Darkness: Looking Back at the My Lai Massacre” *Asia Society*, 18 September 2017, <https://www.asiasociety.org/blog/asia/descent-darkness-looking-back-my-lai-massacre>. Accessed 20 Nov. 2018.

This site provided an interview with the author of *My Lai: Vietnam, 1968, and the Descent into Darkness*, a book on the massacre and its impact. This interview helped me comprehend the impact of the My Lai massacre as analyzed by an expert.

Hastings, Max. *Vietnam*. New York, HarperCollins Publishers, 2018.

Another source over the entirety of the Vietnam War, this book provided information on the My Lai from the lens of how it impacted the course of the war. This information helped me gain a better understanding of the effects of My Lai on the war as a whole.

Hersh, Seymour M. "Scene of the Crime" *The New Yorker*, 30 March, 2015, [www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/03/30/the-scene-of-the-crime](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/03/30/the-scene-of-the-crime). Accessed 5 Jan. 2018.

This is an article by Seymour Hersh on his visit to My Lai and includes his interviews with survivors and many photos of the area in the present-day. I mainly used this article to try to understand My Lai's current legacy. Additionally, I used the number of deaths at My Lai given by the My Lai Museum as opposed to other counts that list conflicting numbers and rough estimates.

Herring, George C. "How to Not Win 'Hearts and Minds'." *New York Times*, 19 Sept. 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/19/opinion/vietnam-war-americans-culture.html>. Accessed 9 May 2019.

This article reflects on how the US was unsuited to war in Vietnam. I used it to gain a perspective on how US methods in fighting were often ineffective and resulted in a bloodier, more difficult war.

Jones, Howard. *My Lai: Vietnam, 1968, and the Descent into Darkness*. New York, Oxford University Press, 2017.

This book gave an extremely comprehensive review of My Lai in context of the Vietnam War and its impact on history. Taking a decade to write, the book was exceedingly well-researched and well-contextualized. I gained considerable insight and detailed elaboration from this book that aided me in better understanding the foundations of the conclusions I drew from My Lai.

Lawrence, Mark Atwood. *The Vietnam War: a Concise International History*. New York, Oxford University Press, 2008.

This book on the Vietnam War gave, as its title states, a concise, objective history on the war. I used it to gain an understanding of the environment and conditions soldiers faced while fighting in Vietnam.

Levesque, Christopher J. "The Truth Behind My Lai". *New York Times*, 16 Mar. 2018.

This article, published in a series on the Vietnam War, provided an account of the massacre and its aftermath as well as a modern analysis of My Lai's impact. The analysis was eye-opening and provided an excellent reflection on the impact of the massacre.

Linder, Douglas O. "Chain of Command Diagram" *Famous Trials*, Professor Douglas O. Linder, [www.famous-trials.com/mylaicourts/1753-myl-cha](http://www.famous-trials.com/mylaicourts/1753-myl-cha). Accessed 26 Dec. 2018.

This page contained a flow chart of the Army units involved in My Lai and labelled what units were comprised of and who led them. The diagram was invaluable to me as a reference for who people were and what they commanded as I read complex reports on the massacre.

Linder, Douglas O. "Survey Results" *Famous Trials*, Professor Douglas O. Linder, [www.famous-trials.com/mylaicourts/1640-myl-surveyresults](http://www.famous-trials.com/mylaicourts/1640-myl-surveyresults). Accessed 24 Dec. 2018.

This page contained several surveys taken in 1971 pertaining to the how the public viewed Lieutenant Calley's sentence and conviction. From this source, I was able to see how people viewed the sentence and conviction and thus better understand public opinion during that time. Because these surveys were cited from older data I could not access, the surveys are a secondary source as listed by historians.

*My Lai*, Directed by Barak Goodman, WGBH Educational Foundation, 2010.

This documentary on the My Lai massacre brought much of the information I had read about to life. I was able to hear and see the stories of Charlie Company, army prosecutors, My Lai civilians, and many more key players in the My Lai tragedy, an experience that made the topic of my paper more real to me. Additionally, the

documentary provided a multifaceted approach to the massacre that inspired depth in my thinking about the My Lai massacre and its impact.

Nelson, Deborah. *The War Behind Me*, New York: Basic Books, 2008.

Nelson's book explores the frequent occurrence of crimes against civilians in Vietnam and compares the trends of brutality against civilians in Vietnam and in Iraq. Her connections across time periods helped me look at the legacy of Vietnam through time.

"Peers Inquiry." *Military Legal Resources*, Federal Research Division,

[www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military\\_Law/Peers\\_inquiry.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/Peers_inquiry.html).

This page contained links to the official published volumes assembled by the Peers Panel as well as a brief description of them. I used it to access the linked volumes, and its description helped me understand the scope of how much material the panel had compiled.

Raviv, Shaun. "The Ghosts of My Lai." *Smithsonian Magazine*, Jan. 2018.

This article on Calley's and My Lai survivors' present emotions toward the massacre drew conclusions through interviews with My Lai villagers and analysis of Calley's actions and words from My Lai onward. It provided me with insight into the factors that may have affected Calley while committing the massacre and how Calley's motivations impacted himself and the public interpretation of the event.

Reilly, Robert. "The Inclination for War Crimes." *Military Review*, May-Jun. 2009, 52-58.

This article, published in a military journal, applied the principles of what was learned from My Lai to modern military conduct. It helped me understand My Lai's effects on the military today, specifically with regard to procedure and ethics.

Spector, Ronald H. "Vietnam War" *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14 Nov. 2018, [www.britannica.com/event/Vietnam-War](http://www.britannica.com/event/Vietnam-War). Accessed 23 Dec. 2018.

This website provided a history of the Vietnam conflict from its roots to its final impact. Because of its organization into easily accessible sections and provision of summaries of events that were comprehensive yet not overwhelmingly laden with details, it helped me easily research events and gain a better understanding of My Lai in the context of the war.

Stur, Heather. "Why the United States Went to War in Vietnam." *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 28 April 2017, [www.fpri.org/article/2017/04/united-states-went-war-vietnam/](http://www.fpri.org/article/2017/04/united-states-went-war-vietnam/). Accessed 4 Jan. 2019.

This webpage contained a paper written analyzing why the United States became involved in Vietnam. I found its analysis enlightening and it helped me better understand the origins of the situation that fostered My Lai.

“Summary of Peers Report”

[http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active\\_learning/explorations/vietnam/peers\\_report.cfm](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/vietnam/peers_report.cfm).

Accessed 5 Jan. 2019.

This summary of the Peers Report allowed me to gain an introduction to the report and what it covered. This knowledge later helped guide my research in using the actual Peers Report.

"The War's Effect on the Vietnamese Land and People." Vietnam War Reference Library.

*Encyclopedia.com*. 2001,

<https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/wars-effect-vietnamese-land-and-people>. Accessed 10 May. 2019.

This website detailed the lasting impacts of the Vietnam War in Vietnam. I used it to help develop ideas of how, just like the My Lai massacre scarred My Lai, the Vietnam war scarred the nation.

“U.S. Involvement in the Vietnam War: The Tet Offensive, 1968.” *Office of the Historian:*

*Milestones: 1961-1968*, U.S. State Department,

[history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/tet](https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/tet). Accessed 5 Jan. 2019.

This article on the Tet Offensive, which was occurring when the My Lai Massacre happened, gave a summary of the event and its impact. I found its description of its impact useful because it helped me better understand the context in which My Lai happened.

Ward, Geoffrey C, and Ken Burns. *The Vietnam war: an intimate history*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017.

This book was a comprehensive analysis of the Vietnam War rich in primary sources and stunning photographs. Its section on My Lai offered a unique overview of the massacre and its aftermath utilizing firsthand accounts, pictures, and analysis from both the 1970s and modernity.