

Tet In Hue: A Study in Communist Policy and Tactics

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May 2, 2014

One of the most persistent myths about the Vietnam War is that PAVN (People's Army of Viet Nam) and PLAF (People's Liberation Armed Forces) troops were Vietnamese patriots fighting for their independence. While there is no doubt that some of those who fought on the North Vietnamese side believed that wholeheartedly, that was never the goal of their leadership. The goal of the North from the very beginning was a communist tyranny.¹ They pursued that goal to the exclusion of all else.

PAVN troops were North Vietnamese regulars (known as NVA by American troops). Many were conscripts. Some were chained to their weapons^{2 3} to force them to fight.⁴ Perhaps as many as 20% of them succumbed to disease on the Ho Chi Minh trail before they ever fired a shot.

PLAF troops were South Vietnamese "Viet Cong" regulars and National Liberation Front irregulars. Many were volunteers, but some were conscripted. Both forces were under the direct command and control of North Vietnam throughout the war. They followed the policies, strategies and tactics provided to them by the communist leadership.

A massacre occurred in Hue that never received the attention it should have in the US media or in academia. It involved both PAVN and PLAF troops. Unlike the My Lai massacre, which was front-page news for months and is still talked about today⁵, the massacre in Hue, which was ten times larger than My Lai, was covered briefly, inaccurately and then promptly ignored.⁶ More to the point, the Hue massacre was symptomatic of a much larger problem that was ignored by the US media.

Apologists for the Vietnamese communists⁷ have exploited this silence to argue that a massacre did not occur, that there was no communist policy to murder thousands of people and that what murders did occur were the result of revenge attacks and the passions of battle. Frances Fitzgerald, the author of the Pulitzer Prize winning study of the Vietnam war, *Fire in the Lake*, wrote, "Nothing like this reverse My Lai ever occurred in the recorded history of the war."⁸

Once the graves were unearthed in Hue the evidence was irrefutable. Many of the bodies had their hands, and sometimes legs, tied. More than a few had been buried alive and had no wounds at all. Many had been bludgeoned to death or shot in the back of the head. A few were beheaded. Rather than battle damage, the bodies provided incontrovertible proof that a massacre had occurred.

This didn't stop the apologists, however. They worked hard to minimize the evidence. They argued that the dead civilians were the result of allied bombings, napalm attacks and the heavy shelling that they claimed was excessive. They misrepresented and lied about the evidence in an effort to "prove" that the RVN was lying about the massacre.⁹ Eventually, the public was led to believe that the bulk of the civilian casualties in Hue were due to Allied bombings and artillery¹⁰ and Hue was forgotten.¹¹

The purpose of this article is to examine the orders, the after action reports and the results of the attack by PAVN and PLAF troops in Hue during the Tet offensive to determine whether the massacre was the result of official communist policy or not and what the magnitude of the massacre was.

The information contained in this article comes from a number of sources. Primarily four were used; a book on the Massacre written by Alje Vennema, a Dutch-Canadian doctor who lived in Hue and witnessed the battle and the massacres and interviewed a number of victims' relatives, a report written by Douglas Pike for US AID, a report compiled by the Government of South Vietnam and a US press release that included map coordinates as well as grave and body counts.

Vennema is an interesting case. D. Gareth Porter cites him (falsely)¹² in his articles claiming the massacre is a myth. Vennema was opposed to the war and believed the communists were the answer to Vietnam's struggles.¹³

"By 1967 after spending five years in South Vietnam as a medical volunteer running a provincial hospital, I had become so appalled by the war and the American involvement that I longed for its end with ever-increasing speed. To that end I became involved in the war's controversies. At that time I felt that the National Liberation Front offered the only solution to the corruption and incessant warfare."

Despite his favorable feelings toward the Viet Cong, Vennema could not get the thoughts of what happened out of his head.¹⁴

"After leaving Vietnam in April 1968, I was caught up by the anti-war fever, gave public speeches, and was asked question about the city of Hue, as to what exactly happened. When asked to write an article on the city of Hue by the New York Review of Books disclaiming allegations of the South Vietnamese government that an efficient slaughter had taken place, I started to reflect, and more and more incidents and names of friends came to mind. The obsession to find out what really had happened would not let me go, and as a result I returned to Hue several times, again and again looking, searching, tracing contacts, visiting villages and families of the bereaved. Bit by bit I became aware of the real impact of the tragedy that had taken place and felt that the truth about the city of Hue should be made known, to be inscribed in the annals of history alongside the names of Lidice, Putte and Warsaw."

Vennema's article was never published. Apparently the truth was of no interest to the New York Review of Books. Vennema was forced to self-publish in order to get his story told. Today the book is hard to find, only available in a few libraries, out of print and unavailable for sale anywhere.

The value of Vennema's book cannot be overestimated. It is a clear admission against interest, as he admits in his Preface. There is no more valuable evidence of the truth of a matter. Yet, contra Porter's claims, Vennema's book supports not only Pike's study (which Porter concludes "must be judged unworthy of serious consideration"¹⁵) but the other studies in many respects as well.¹⁶

The Orders

The battle of Hue lasted from Jan 31st, 1968 to Feb 25th, 1968. The PAVN and PLAF had several missions;¹⁷ Conduct a general attack and uprising, overthrow the governmental apparatus in the City of Hue and the Province of Thua Thien, establish a revolutionary administration and continue to pursue and counterattack ARVN and Allied forces to protect the gains that they had made.

These missions were described in tremendous detail in a 3500-page document issued on Jan 26th, 1968 by the Tri-Thien-Hue Political Directorate.¹⁸ The political cadres' job was spelled out as follows:

'Operating in close support of the regular military and guerrilla elements, the political cadre were to:

- destroy and disorganize the Republic of Viet-Nam's (RVN) administrative machinery "from province and district levels to the city wards, streets, and wharves;"*
- motivate the people of Hue to take up arms, pursue the enemy, seize power, and establish a revolutionary government;*
- motivate (recruit) local citizens for military and "security" forces .. transportation and supply activities, and to serve wounded soldiers . . . ;"*
- "pursue to the end (and) punish "spies, reactionaries, and "tyrants"*
- i. e. , government administrators, civil servants, police, and others employed by or notable adherents of the Republic of Viet-Nam; and*
- "maintain order and security in the city" — i. e. , control the population'*

This mission for one area of the city, the Phu Ninh ward, included the following instructions:¹⁹

"Annihilate all spies, reactionaries, and foreign teachers (such as Americans and Germans) in the area. Break open prisons. Investigate cadre, soldiers and receptive civilians imprisoned by the enemy. Search

for tyrants and reactionaries who are receiving treatment in hospitals.

The orders for Target Area 2 ("the Phu Vinh ward") were similar; ***"Annihilate the enemy in the area... Rally the Buddhist force to advance the isolation of reactionaries who exploit the Catholics of Phu Cam"***. The orders for Target Area 3 ("the wharves along the An Cuu River and from Truong Sung to the Kho Ren Bridge") followed the same pattern; ***"Search for and pursue spies, tyrants and reactionaries hiding near the wharf... Motivate the people in the areas along the River to annihilate the enemy."*** For Target Area 4 (the district including Phu Cam and the Binh Anh, Truong Giang, Truong Cuu and An Lang sections) the orders were; ***"Search for and pursue spies and reactionaries in the area... Destroy the power and influence of reactionary leaders..."*** For Area 1, Cell 3 was assigned the job of ***"Annihilation of tyrants and the elimination of traitors."***

Similar "security" cells would fan out throughout Hue tracking down "spies" and "reactionaries" and "tyrants". The daughter of the deputy district chief of Trieu Phong in Quang Tri province reported that communist troops first came looking for her father at 2:00 AM on the morning of Feb 1st, mere hours after they had entered Hue. Three days later he was gone, taken away for "10 days of re-education". His body was never found.²⁰

Some Top Secret PAVN documents were captured in June 1968 by US 1st Cav troops operating in the mountains west of Hue. Among the documents was a communist directive written two days before the battle began. It read,²¹

"For the purpose of a lengthy occupation of Hue, we should immediately liberate the rural areas and annihilate the wicked GVN administrative personnel.

*Specific Mission We must attack the enemy key agencies, economic installations, and lines of communications. **We must also annihilate the enemy mobile troops, reactionary elements and tyrants."***

On Feb 1st, the provincial administration, having taken control of Hue, issued a directive that ordered the troops, in part,²²

"To wipe out all puppet administrative organs of the puppet Thieu-Ky (President Thieu, Vice President Ky) clique at all levels in the province, city and town down to every single hamlet."

On the same day, the Liberation Front radio announced,²³

"We tell our compatriots that we are determined to topple the regime of the traitorous Thieu-Ky clique and to punish and annihilate those who have been massacring and oppressing our compatriots...we ask our compatriots to...help us arrest all the U.S.-puppet cruel henchmen."

A VC commander who defected in June 1969 and revealed the massacre of 500 people at Da Mai Creek stated that²⁴

“the Viet Cong district chief told him the mass murder was specifically authorized by the South Vietnamese Communist command on grounds that the victims had been traitors to the revolution.”

It is clear from their orders and the careful planning that went into their attack that along with a military victory, the High Command in Hanoi also expected the PAVN and PALF to “annihilate” and “punish” the city leadership, civil servants and anyone else who supported the RVN. Precisely what that meant in practical terms would be revealed over the next 19 months.

The After Action Reports

On Feb 4th, Radio Hanoi announced,²⁵

“After one hour's fighting the Revolutionary Armed Forces occupied the residence of the puppet provincial Governor (in Hue), the prison and the offices of the puppet administration . . . The Revolutionary Armed Forces punished most cruel agents of the enemy and seized control of the streets . . . rounded up and punished dozens of cruel agents and caused the enemy organs of control and oppression to crumble.”

Communist troops, in concert with the local communists, roamed through the city with lists of people who were to be eliminated. A 70-year-old man was summarily executed in the street simply for refusing to obey the troops.²⁶ Some were executed in front of their families and left lying on the lawn for the family to bury. In some cases the entire family was murdered.²⁷

On Feb 14th, the Thua Thien-Hue People's Revolutionary Committee issued a statement that read in part,²⁸

“Concerned over the country's survival and their own fate, on 31 January 1968, the Thua Thien-Hue people rose up holding weapons in their hands, smashed the puppet ruling apparatus from the provincial to the village and hamlet levels, and completely liberated the rural areas and the city of Hue. The enemy has suffered disastrous defeats. A number of ringleaders of the puppet administration have surrendered to the people or have been arrested and have been detained by the revolutionary forces. Except for some localities and scattered guard posts which have not yet been liquidated, the Thua Thien-Hue puppet administration has basically disintegrated.”

An entry in a captured communist document dated Feb 22nd stated,²⁹

*“Troop proselyting by the VC/NVA forces was not successful because the troops had to devote themselves to combat missions. Moreover, they were afraid of being discovered by the enemy. **It was very difficult for them to handle POW’s so they executed the policy of “catch and kill.”**”*

A February 25th captured communist document detailed some of the successes of the Special Action Company of the NVA 6th Regiment.³⁰

*“**We captured and exterminated thousands of people** of the revolutionary network. From province to village we broke the enemy’s administrative grip for the people to rise.”*

A report written immediately after the battle by a political officer of the People’s Revolutionary Party listed 2,826

“administrative personnel, nationalist political party members, ‘tyrants’ and policemen that were killed by their troops.”³¹

That would turn out to be less than 50% of the total murdered, abducted and missing. 4062 civilians murdered or abducted were identified,³² some as young as 1-year-old and others as old as 90-years-old. Approximately 1800 disappeared and were never found. Many bodies were never identified.

Another document, undated but written by a senior political officer and marked “ABSOLUTE SECRET”^{33 34} reported on the results of the political operation.

*“**Huong Thuy District: ...We also killed one member of the Dai Viet Party Committee, one senator of South Vietnam, 50 Quoc Dan Dang Party members, six Dai Viet Party members, 13 Can Lao Nhan Vi Party members, three captains, four first lieutenants, and liberated 35 hamlets with 32,000 people.... Phu Vang District...We eliminated 1,892 administrative personnel, 38 policemen, 790 tyrants, six captains, two first lieutenants, 20 second lieutenants, and many NCOs.**”³⁵*

The same document contained a passage that read:³⁶

“The people joined our soldiers in their search for tyrants, reactionaries and spies. For instance, Mrs. Xuan followed our soldiers to show the houses of the tyrants she knew, although she had only six days before giving birth to a child.”

In March 1968, in the official Hanoi press, the North reported,³⁷

“Actively combining their efforts with those of the People's Liberation Armed Forces and population, other self-defense and armed units of the city of

Hue arrested and called to surrender the surviving functionaries of the puppet administration and officers and men of the puppet army who were skulking. Die-hard cruel agents were punished."

A March 13th, 1968 entry in captured documents reviewed the successes of the attack on Hue.³⁸

"Enormous victory: We annihilated more than 3,000 tyrannical puppet army and government administrative personnel, including the Deputy Province Chief of Thua Thien."

A report written by the commander of the 6th Regiment on March 30 stated that they had captured thousands of:³⁹

"local administrative personnel, puppet troops, and cruel tyrants" and successfully "annihilated members of various reactionary political parties, henchmen, and wicked tyrants."

It also stated that they had ***"killed 1,000 local administrative personnel, spies and cruel tyrants."***

On April 26, 1968, Hanoi, reacting to the discovery of mass graves in Hue, announced that the people murdered by their troops were,⁴⁰

"hooligan lackeys who had incurred blood debts of the Hue compatriots and who were annihilated by the Front's Armed Forces in the early spring of 1968."

This is an official admission by the government of North Vietnam that their troops committed murders in Hue under orders from High Command. In other words, it was the official policy of the communists to murder people.

On April 27, 1969, Radio Hanoi criticized authorities in Hue and South Vietnam, stating,⁴¹

"In order to cover up their cruel acts, the puppet administration in Hue recently played the farce of setting up a so-called committee for the search for burial sites of the hooligan lackeys who had owed blood debts to the Tri-Thien-Hue compatriots and who were annihilated by the Southern Armed Forces and people in early Mau Than spring."

Here the communist command, probably realizing that they had implicated themselves in the murders, attempted to cover up their crimes by blaming them on "the Southern Armed Forces and the people". The subterfuge wouldn't work, however, because it was well known that Hanoi had complete command and control of all Southern forces.

A cadre diary captured by 1st US Air Cavalry Division troops contained an entry that read:⁴²

"The entire puppet administrative system from hamlet to province was destroyed or disintegrated. More than 3,000 persons were killed. The enemy could never reorganize or make up for his failure. Although he could immediately use inexperienced elements as replacements, they were good for nothing."

In December 1968 the Hue City People's Revolutionary Party Central Committee released a summary of the Party's accomplishments during Tet. The summary included the following statement:⁴³

"Thousands of tyrants were killed. Many reactionary factions and organizations were exterminated."

That same month, Don Oberdorfer reported in the Washington Post,⁴⁴

"Ho Ty was arrested by the government police on Sept. 4 this year. At the time of his arrest, he was party secretary for a section of Hue city...Ho Ty reported that the part of the plan from higher headquarters was to destroy the government machinery of Hue and the people who made it work.....He said the killings were planned and executed by a separate group in charge of security."

In January 1970, NLF Liberation Radio, referring to the events in Hue two years previous announced: *"The people of Hue dealt the enemy proper punishing blows, and wicked agents paid for their sins. Many of them were tried by people's courts."* The broadcast also criticized the Hue authorities for *"opening up the graves of the wicked agents punished by our people during the Mau Than Tet."*⁴⁵

In 1987, at a Hanoi conference to discuss the history of the Tet offensive, Colonel General Tran Van Quang, one of the commanders for the Hue operation, assessed the strengths and weaknesses of his forces, citing as one of their strengths:⁴⁶

"We resolutely carried out the orders and fulfilled the requirements set out for us by the High Command. We motivated our cadre, soldiers, and the civilian population through the use of the slogans, 'Tri-Thien fights for Tri-Thien and for the entire nation,' and 'Heroically and resolutely conduct attacks and uprisings.'"

In February 1988 Vietnamese Communist leaders admitted "mistakes" were made in Hue. Col Nguyen Quoc Khanh, commander of part of the forces that took over Hue stated that "There was no case of killing civilians purposefully.....Those

civilians who were killed were killed accidentally, in cross fire." But he admitted, "some rank and file soldiers may have committed individual mistakes."⁴⁷

It's doubtful that the Vietnamese Communist leaders will ever admit to the crimes they committed in Hue, but the evidence shows that they not only knew about it, they planned and ordered it and proudly reported it afterwards.

Given the consistent nature of the orders that they were given, the enthusiastic reports of murders contained in the after action reports and the statement from a commander that they fulfilled the requirements set out for them by the High Command, it's hard to come to any other conclusion than that the PAVN and PLAF troops in Hue were doing exactly what they had been ordered to do by Hanoi; murder thousands of civilians.

The Results

As the manifest evidence shows, eliminating "puppet administrative organs", "reactionary elements", "cruel agents" and "tyrants" was one of the missions of the PAVN and PLAF troops in Hue. They carried it out with discipline and precision. Bernard Weinraub, reporting in the New York Times on March 1st, wrote that 25% of the civil servants had shown up for work. Many of the others would be found in graves.⁴⁸

On Feb 5th, Stephen Miller, a 27-year-old American Quaker serving with the US civil affairs office, was marched to a Catholic seminary at gunpoint and savagely beaten to death along with 4 Vietnamese civilians.⁴⁹ Catholic priests buried their bodies in the seminary yard. Six of his co-workers were also killed, and three were abducted. The body of one of them, Thomas W. Ragsdale, was found in a shallow grave in the Au Shau valley more than a year later.⁵⁰ The bodies of the other two abductees were never found.

That same day, three German professors from the medical mission of the University of Hue and one of the professor's wives were abducted by communist troops. Their bodies were found in a shallow grave on Apr 2nd. All four bodies had their hands tied behind their backs with barbed wire and a single gunshot wound to the back of the head.⁵¹

On February 8th Le Van Phu, a 47-year-old policeman was arrested at his home. His wife and children pleaded with the troops to no avail. He was shot in the head. Ngo Thong, a 66-year-old retired civil servant was arrested as well. He was found in a trench with 10 other victims. Some of them had been buried alive.⁵²

On February 9th troops entered the house of Major Tu Ton Khan, Chief of the Rural Development Service in Hue. When his wife wouldn't tell the troops where he was they threatened to burn the house down. The Major came out of hiding and was marched out of the house. His body, hands tied behind the back and riddled with

bullets, was found on Feb 28th.⁵³

On February 17th Nguyen Van Dong, a 42-year-old policeman was rounded up. He was buried alive.⁵⁴

On February 22nd troops came for Hoang Thi Tam Tuy, a 26-year-old market vendor and took her away for “re-education”. Her body was found with legs and arms tied, a rag in her mouth and no wounds. She had been buried alive.

In one documented case,⁵⁵

“...a squad with a death order entered the home of a prominent community leader and shot him, his wife, his married son and daughter-in-law, his young unmarried daughter, a male and female servant and their baby. The family cat was strangled; the family dog was clubbed to death; the goldfish scooped out of the fishbowl and tossed on the floor. When the Communists left, no life remained in the house.”

In response to a recent inquiry regarding military eyewitnesses of the massacre, LTC Ronald Bower AUS (ret) told me the following:⁵⁶

We found another grave not long after the May 5th attack, of four Marines who had been in the City and were playing cards in a house when they were captured by the VC. They had their hands tied behind their backs and had each been shot in the head and buried in a grave not far from this one.”

The area LTC Bower refers to is in the Phu Thu district where about a thousand bodies were found. No record that I have access to refers to the murder of these four Marines. It should not be a surprise, then, to find discrepancies between accounts. It’s doubtful that every grave was found or every body uncovered or every person accounted for. It’s equally doubtful that any one account would report every grave found, unless it was an official governmental record.

These grisly scenes would be repeated over and over again hundreds of times every day. Once the battle was over, the civilian government of Hue reported that 1214 civilians were determined to be battle casualties; their locations and wounds testified to the fact that artillery shells, bombs, napalm or bullets killed them. 1260 were hospitalized and survived.⁵⁷ They also estimated that 5800 civilians were missing.^{58 59}

Numerous eyewitness accounts testified to the brutal efficiency and deliberate planning of the murders. Four eyewitnesses escaped from certain death to tell their stories, two of them from the Da Mai creek slaughter.⁶⁰ Their story is chilling.

*Suddenly, I overheard two VC cadres talking to each other:
"In 15, 20 minutes, we'll kill them all"*

*I was trembling. Reaching close to my friend sitting right in front of me:
"Try to get loose and escape! In 15 minutes we'll all be shot dead!"*

*It rains. The wire was slippery, after a while, we managed to free ourselves but stayed still, scared of being found out. I whispered:
"When I tap gently on your back, let's run!"*

The VC woke us up, in a loud voice to make all of us heard, one of them said: "We are arriving to the reform camp. Those who have jewelry, money, watches, cigarette lighters, ... give them all to us, you are not allowed to keep them. You will have them back once you have been reformed and completed the learning."

So they robbed us of everything and put all into the knapsacks. The one who stood close to me had on him a dozen of radios taken from those in the city (downtown). The rifle on one hand, things taken on the other, he slowed down, walked behind the others by a distance. When we started going down hill, hearing the running water, I tapped gently on the shoulder of my friend. Both of us, pulled out our hands, threw ourselves out of the line. I gave the communist cadre (carrying the radios) a hell kick. He tumbled over! We hurled into the jungle ... It was dark, in the middle of the jungle; the VC did not chase us.

Once the group had gone away for a while, we crawled out, walked back to the other direction. In about 15 to 20 minutes, we heard from the creek down below the resounding of AK gunfire, explosions of grenades, which were thundering, flaring up a corner of the jungle. Crying, screaming and howling voices were heard from far away ... horrible! It was around midnight or half past 12, on the 8th day of Tet.

More than 500 skulls were found at Da Mai Creek. 428 of the victims were identified.

Another eyewitness escapee recounted the following story:⁶¹

Nguyen Tan Chau, of the South Vietnamese Armed Medical Corps, was in Hue visiting his family during the Tet holidays when the Communists attacked. He was captured and held with 30 other prisoners. They were started South, bound together in three groups of ten.

He told South Vietnamese investigators later that when the column halted for a rest, he freed his hands and slipped away in the darkness. From a hiding place he witnessed the following scene: "The larger prisoners were separated into pairs, tied together back to back and shot. The others were shot singly. All were

dumped into two shallow graves, including those who had been wounded but were not dead,"

Another escapee, hamlet official Phan Duy, got away at the last possible moment. As his grave was being dug (for himself and nine other men), he managed to slip from his bonds and run away, with one of the guards firing at him as he ran.⁶²

"I ran about 300 meters, and I saw a pool. I fell into the water and covered myself with the reeds."

Asked to recount his experience of being held captive in a house for seven days, Duy responded,

"I remember on the second day I was held in prison in that house, other people from my hamlet told me the Vietcong had entered my home and killed my mother. When I returned I found her body still in the house. I was her only son."

Several captured enemy identified grave locations that were unknown at the time, including the horrible slaughter at Da Mai Creek where 500 innocent civilians lost their lives.

Unfortunately no precise forensic analysis of the statistics of the murders is extant, to my knowledge. We are left with eyewitness accounts as well as government sponsored reports, news articles and historians' accounts that attempt to provide varying levels of detail regarding the massacre. The reports are disjointed and imprecise, the dates of production vary greatly, the names of locations of graves don't always match, and the actual numbers of bodies discovered are difficult to discern at times. I have attempted to sort them out by matching accounts, as much as possible, on a spreadsheet.⁶³

The results show that, at a minimum, about 2,802 bodies were uncovered,⁶⁴ possibly as many as 3,500. Since the communists boasted of killing 3000 or more, it seems that would be an appropriate bottom number. The maximum would be the entire 5,800 that were determined to be missing. It's likely that at least a few ended up in prisons in the north, but it's impossible to know with any precision exactly how many were murdered.

It's doubtful that all the graves were ever found. The government identified, by name and place of residence, 4026 individuals who were either murdered or abducted.⁶⁵ 1800 were never found, but some of them are almost certainly part of the 4062 that were identified. A significant number of the bodies recovered were unidentifiable due to decomposition or facial damage caused by shots to the head or bludgeoning.

The true extent of the slaughter wasn't known for more than 18 months, as graves filled with bodies continued to be discovered purely by accident. In one case a farmer found a wire sticking up in his field. When he pulled on it, a hand popped out of the ground.⁶⁶ In another case, a soldier sitting down for lunch reached for his C-rations and grabbed a foot instead. That's when he realized he was sitting on a gravesite.⁶⁷

An ARVN soldier on patrol south of Hue noticed a wire sticking out of the ground. Thinking it was a booby trap, he very carefully worked to uncover it. He discovered the body of an old man, his hands tied together with the wire. Two days later 130 bodies had been uncovered.⁶⁸

In each of the graves victims were found who had been shot in the back of the head, others who had been buried alive and still others who had been beaten to death. A few may have been battle deaths or dead PAVN or PLAF troops, but most of them were obviously murdered. Some were beheaded. Some were tied up to the Citadel gate and left there to be killed by artillery or bombing and strafing runs.⁶⁹

Some have tried to argue that the murders were few in number, that they were committed by rogue troops or that they were understandable given the circumstances. All these arguments fail in the light of the evidence. (A more comprehensive study of the lies told by apologists will be forthcoming.)

Given the numerous eyewitness accounts, the bodies uncovered with hands tied, shot through the head or buried alive, the communist orders issued and the gloating after action reports, the idea that there was not a massacre in Hue of thousands of people defies logic and is soundly refuted by the preponderance of evidence.

The only question that remains is how many were killed. We will never know a specific number, but it seems the minimum must be the 4062 that have been identified plus the more than 800 bodies that were found but never identified.⁷⁰ Whether the remaining 1000 were among the unidentified bodies, were murdered, died during the arduous journey through the jungles to North Vietnam or died in prison seems a moot point. They disappeared and were never seen again.⁷¹

South Vietnamese Reprisals?

The Italian journalist, Oriana Fallaci, visited Hue in February before the battle was over. In fact, she was shot at by retreating communist troops. She reported that a priest, whom she did not identify, told her that:⁷²

"After the 'Liberation,' at least 200 who were suspected of being Vietcong or of having collaborated with the Vietcong were killed by the South Vietnamese. Without even a summary trial, without any exact accusation. Some machine gun bursts and that was that. The massacre began as soon as

the Marines had taken the Imperial Palace, and it's only the corpses of those 200 that have been recovered.. Altogether, there have been 1,100 killed. Mostly students, university teachers, priests. Intellectuals and religious people at Hue have never hidden their sympathy for the NLF."

The Fallaci story is confusingly worded, it conflates the communist executions with the purported revenge executions, and I found no corroborating news reports. It also makes an impossible claim – that the supposed assassination began several days after authorities had announced that there would be no executions. Furthermore, there were no Catholic priests in Hue who supported the communists. The communists killed four of them and shot two others while they were in Hue.⁷³

More importantly, the Marines never took the Imperial Palace as the “priest” claims. It had been decided that the South Vietnamese should do that. The 2nd Battalion 3rd Armored Regiment ARVN took the palace on the 24th of February.⁷⁴ By that time the media had already reported that 200 collaborators were in custody, that there would be no executions without trials and that military tribunals would be held to determine guilt or innocence.

Eyewitnesses testified that people were taken away and never seen again within the first few days, long before U.S. Marines were even able to cross the river. Many of those bodies were later disinterred and identified at the Gia Hoi School and the Tang Quang Tu Pagoda. A Buddhist monk stated that he and his fellow monks *“listened nightly to the screams for mercy and the sound of pistol and automatic rifle fire as people were executed in a plowed field behind the pagoda.”*⁷⁵ The bodies were identified as those of students, university teachers and priests (among others) as the priest states, but they were killed by the communists, not by revenge squads.

The Fallaci story was apparently the genesis of a rumor that South Vietnamese hit squads were rounding up civilians who had sided with the communists and executing them. Don Oberdorfer, Stanley Karnow and Marilyn Young all reported the executions.

The first to repeat the story was Don Oberdorfer in Tet!. He wrote:⁷⁶

It was reliably reported that a South Vietnamese intelligence unit employed the confusion to send out “black teams” of assassins to eliminate some of those believed to have aided the enemy. Some of the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong suspects who were brought into Hue in those days mysteriously disappeared, with no record available of what happened to them.

This is an odd report. First he states that the “black teams” were searching for those who “aided the enemy”. Then he writes about communist military people who supposedly disappeared without a trace. Those were the enemy, not those who aided them. Who were the supposed assassins eliminating? Collaborators? Or the

enemy? Why would they need to eliminate the enemy? Wouldn't they already be fighting the enemy and trying to eliminate them?

Oberdorfer, however, adds something not found in the Fallaci report.

On March 14 more than twenty prisoners, including three women and some schoolboys, were brought into provincial military headquarters in the devastated city with burlap bags covering their heads and their hands tightly wired behind their backs. Guards began beating some of the captives with sticks and fists. After one man confessed he had been an economic and finance cadre for the Viet Cong, two guards beat him senseless, one kicking him brutally and the other standing on his face. An American who was present was affected particularly by one of the prisoners, who under the burlap bag was a very pretty girl with long, silky black hair and clear complexion. She was described as a Viet Cong nurse.

The prisoners were taken into a stone building which served as a temporary house of detention and, according to general belief, a place of execution. There was no trace of them in the morning.

Oberdorfer provides no source for the information in the first paragraph, nor does he indicate that he personally investigated the story. It appears that he's referring to Fallaci's report ("reliably reported"), but he doesn't state that. The following paragraph appears to be original reporting and likely report the facts as he was able to ascertain them.

In Stanley Karnow's *Vietnam A History* he wrote:⁷⁷

"Clandestine South Vietnamese teams slipped into Hue after the Communist occupation to assassinate suspected enemy collaborators; they threw many of the bodies into common graves with the Vietcong's victims."

Eight years later, Marilyn Young included a similar account in her book, *The Vietnam Wars 1945-1990*.⁷⁸

"At the same time, in the last days of the NLF occupation of Hue, teams of Saigon government assassins fanned out through the city with their own list of targets, underground NLF supporters who had revealed themselves in the course of occupying the city."

Neither writer provides any attribution for the source of the aside. Both likely trace their genesis to the Fallaci story and the unnamed priest. (I was not able to find any news accounts other than Fallaci's that related the story.)

Scott Laderman included it in his book, *Tours of Vietnam: War, Travel Guides and Memory* where he cited Fallaci, Karnow (citing the wrong page) and Young but no other sources.⁷⁹

I reached out through contacts for accounts from anyone who was in Hue during that time. A source that would have reason to know if the ARVN had any assassination squads executing VC in Hue sent me this account:

The only enemy we captured were VC/NVA snipers firing from the roof of a refugee building (former school house) when someone gave us this information. We captured them and sent them to the Provincial Interrogation Center (PIC).

The only atrocities I learned of were those committed by the VC/NVA. Along with a Marine Captain assigned to us by III MAF to assist the RDC Program, we dug up a common grave based upon reports the VC had executed an American at the Catholic Church. We located the body... which we later identified as Steve Miller, a career State Department officer who was visiting Hue. Steve spoke fluent Vietnamese. He had been tortured with his arms tied behind him with barbed wire and shot in the back of his head while on his knees.

According to secret reports from personnel in Hue, approximately 5,000 soldiers and civilians were murdered by the VC/NVA while they occupied the city. These reports cite the victims as both male and female, adult and children. Most were civilians and included teachers, civil servants, police, religious leaders, politicians, Hoi Chanh - and the families of these people. They were all killed without a trial or any attempt to justify their murder. Several US civilians were also killed, as were several Germans. These reports are still classified, unfortunately.

Given the slaughter the communists committed, it's certainly possible (and believable) that the South Vietnamese troops would have wanted to take revenge. Contemporaneous reports, however, indicate that they did not, with the exception of the March 14 report by Oberdorfer.

On February 21, while the battle still raged, the Mayor of Hue, Lt. Col. Phan Van Khoa ordered that looters should be shot on sight and announced that there would be "public executions within two days of some Communist agents arrested recently."⁸⁰

The next day the New York Times reported⁸¹ that a military tribunal was planned to try the collaborators, that authorities were holding 200 prisoners and that 30 of them were believed to be high-ranking communists. It also reported that

"...on the basis of an order from General Lam, that there would be no executions in the city without military trials. He said yesterday that public executions would be necessary to restore order."

So while summary executions had been planned and announced by the Mayor of Hue, a higher-ranking official countermanded the order. The following day the Times reported that:⁸²

"...sources said he [Brig. Gen. Nguyen Ngoc Loan, Chief of South Vietnam Police] would interrogate a former Hue police chief, who is alleged to be one of the leaders of a Vietcong attack on the city, and politicians and militant Buddhists suspected of aiding or sympathizing with the Vietcong."

In late March, Stewart Harris, a London Times correspondent writing in the New York Times discussed the current situation.⁸³

According to the police chief, Doan Cong Lap, the Government has 477 Vietcong and North Vietnamese soldiers in custody.

"What about suspects?" he was asked. "What about officials and civilians who should have supported the Government and either went over to the enemy or went into hiding until they saw the Government would win? How many of these have you taken?"

After three visits to the police chief and one to the new provincial chief, Colonel Than, the figure was given: "Nearly 300."

They also said that none of these people had been executed and that none had been brought to trial. Colonel Khoa, the provincial chief until two weeks ago, had been given temporary power to execute summarily any traitor holding a senior position. Moreover, six weeks ago the South Vietnamese promised to set up immediately a military tribunal in Hue. Yet no one has been tried.

It's difficult to imagine how 200 to 1100 prisoners would have been executed by hit squads yet 200 or "nearly 300" would be arrested and detained. Why wouldn't they have killed them all? And why would 30 high-ranking communists be spared? Why were there no other news reports? Given Col. Than's obvious desire to kill some of the prisoners, why weren't some of them publicly executed?

There are several possible explanations for the Fallaci report. Perhaps there was a language barrier between Fallaci and the priest that caused her to write this confusing account. The priest could have been mistaken, basing his belief on the Mayor's Feb. 21 announcement and then embellishing his account. The priest could have been a communist propagandist. Or the story could be true. If it's true, there is no evidence supporting it, and there were no other news reports confirming it. It certainly seems there would have been, had it been true.

It seems clear that all the later reports with the exception of Oberdorfer's account of March 14 relied on Fallaci's report, but that report has issues that make it questionable at best. The report is at odds with all the other known evidence and, in my opinion, can be discounted as false. The March 14 account appears to be true and may indicate that more than those twenty were executed. Without more

evidence, it's difficult to say how many that could have been. It's doubtful the number rose to 200 much less 1,100.

Conclusions

The idea that there was no massacre in Hue doesn't withstand a careful examination of the facts.

1. There were detailed orders given pre-battle that included eliminating pro-RVN people with detailed lists provided.
2. Multiple captured after action reports listed the numbers of people killed, in some cases even who they were by position and stated that the orders had been followed correctly.
3. The numerous eyewitness accounts, both local Vietnamese and journalists, confirm that many people were executed. The manner of their deaths corresponds to the manner of death of the found bodies. Many of the dead also match the captured communist reports of who was killed.
4. Finally, the detailed reports of graves uncovered and bodies counted, corroborated by Pike's report, the US News release, the GVN report and Vennema's account confirm that a massacre did take place and provide evidence of its size.

In comparing accounts in Appendix A, it's clear that at least 3,000 bodies were found. The number of graves and gravesites is less clear for several reasons. Pike's report is in the form of a summary rather than providing needed detail. Vennema's account is incomplete, having concluded before all the bodies had been found. The GVN report varies significantly from the others in some sites yet matches others closely. It's difficult to know if it is more precise or inflated.

For example, in the Gia Hoi area, Vennema reports 203 bodies, Pike 170, the US News Release 200 and the GVN 425. Either the GVN number is incorrect or more bodies were discovered, but the report lists 22 graves, which matches the US News Release. I think it's likely the number was somewhere around 200. The GVN report may have conflated two different sites.

At the Tang Quang Tu Pagoda, Vennema has 43 bodies, Pike and the US report agree on 77 and the GVN report has 299. Given the other numbers the 299 is probably too high.

However, the GVN report agrees with every other report regarding the Imperial Tombs; 201 bodies were found (Vennema lists 203.) The reports also agree on the number of bodies at the Van Chi School (9) and the Cho Thuong marketplace (100).

Strangely, at ApDong Gi Tay, Vennema reports 110, Pike reports 100 and the GVN report has 75.

Given the numbers in these reports, it's impossible to say much with any certainty except in certain locations. The totals for each report do display an agreement that indicates that about 3,000 bodies were found.

Vennema has 2397 but is missing the November 1969 finds. Those would increase his total to at least 2637 and perhaps 3047. Pike has 2802 but there's a problem with his report. He states that 1200 bodies were found in the first phase (Feb-Apr) yet his total is only 915. (The US News Release that only covers the first phase has 1143.) Somehow Pike failed to account for about 240 bodies. Adding those to his total would push his total to 3047, agreeing with Vennema almost exactly on the first three phases (2397 vs 2392). The GVN report has 3373, just 1.4 times higher than Vennema's lowest possible number (2397 + 240 for the 4th phase -- 2637).

Porter's claim that Vennema's report "found that the number of victims in the grave sites he examined were inflated in the U.S.-Saigon count by over seven-fold" is obviously false.⁸⁴ The greatest variance is the GVN report, and the others essentially agree with Vennema in the finds they list.

In the final analysis, it appears that about 5,000 people were murdered; about 3,000 bodies were found and about 2000 of those were identified. The rest were never found. 4,062 of the victims were eventually identified, and about another 1,000 disappeared into history without a trace.

¹ Schmehl, Paul "Who Was Ho Chi Minh? A Deceitful Mass Murderer." VVfH 14 Apr 2014. Web. 15 Apr 2014. <<http://www.vvfh.org/blog/2014/04/who-was-ho-chi-minh-a-deceitful-mass-murderer/>>

² Publication - Hue Massacre, 1968-1998, in English and Vietnamese - includes personal note and newspaper articles in Vietnamese, No Date, Folder 03, Box 01, Lu Lan Collection, The Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University. Accessed 17 Apr. 2014.

<<http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/virtualarchive/items.php?item=19350103001>>. 11

³ Nha Ca *Mourning Headband For Hue* (Indianapolis:Indiana Univerity Press 2014) Dead NVA soldiers chained to their machineguns are attested to in several passages

⁴ "3 Dead Enemy Soldiers Reported Chained to Gun." *New York Times (1923-Current file)*: 3 Feb 17 1968. ProQuest. Web. 2 May 2014 . p. 3

⁵ A search for "Hue Massacre" in the Internet TV News Archive returns zero relevant hits. A search for "My Lai Massacre" returns 21 relevant hits.

⁶ There are around 20 published books on My Lai. There is one on the Hue Massacre. Among the 41 newspaper articles that I was able to locate, most were 1 or 2 column inch articles buried pages deep in the paper. Very few were front-page news.

⁷ Chief among them have been Noam Chomsky, D. Gareth Porter, Marilyn Young and Edward S. Herman.

⁸ More On The Deer Hunter, *Daily World*, Friday, May 11, 1979, 13

⁹ Porter, D. Gareth "The 1968 'Hue Massacre'" *Indochina Chronicle* #13 June 24, 1974

¹⁰ Warner, Denis. "Hue Massacre Not Born of Panic". *Dallas Morning News*. 29 Jun 1970. ProQuest Web 1 May 2014. p. 21A

¹¹ Baskin, Robert E. "Communist Atrocities Forgotten". *Dallas Morning News*. 30 Nov 1969. ProQuest Web May 1, 2014. p. 39A

¹² It will take an entire article, which will be forthcoming, to show how dishonest Porters "scholarship" is

¹³ Vennema, Alje *The Viet Cong Massacre at Hue* (New York:Vantage Press 1976) iii

¹⁴ Vennema iv

¹⁵ Porter

¹⁶ See Appendix A, a spreadsheet reconciling the various reports of the graves and bodies accounted for in Hue and the surrounding communities.

¹⁷ Study of the Hue Massacre, March 1968, Folder 14, Box 13, Douglas Pike Collection: Unit 05 - National Liberation Front, The Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University. Accessed 15 Apr. 2014.

<<http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/virtualarchive/items.php?item=2311314001>>. 27

¹⁸ Study 28

¹⁹ Study 30-32

²⁰ Nguyễn, Minh Công. "Nhân Chứng Sống Kể Lại Cuộc Thảm Sát Tết Mậu Thân 1968 Tại Huế". <<http://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/vietnam-43b0a0-interview-with-mrs-nguyen-cong-minh>> *Video Interview*. WGBH TV Boston. Retrieved 5 April 2014

²¹ Study 113

²² Vennema 193

²³ Vennema 195

²⁴ Study 85

²⁵ The Viet Cong Strategy of Terror Chapter III: Hue, February 1970, Folder 13, Box 13, Douglas Pike Collection: Unit 05 - National Liberation Front, The Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University. Accessed 15 Apr. 2014.

<<http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/virtualarchive/items.php?item=2311313037>>. 54

²⁶ Vennema 185

²⁷ Vennema 141

²⁸ Vennema 196-197

²⁹ Study 114

³⁰ Study 115

³¹ Study 7

³² 'List of Civilians Massacred by the Communists During "Tet Mau Than" in Thua Thien Province ad Hue City' VVfH 16 Apr 2014. Web 16 Apr 2014.

<[http://www.vvfh.org/uploads/List of Civilians Massacred by the Communists During "Tet Mau Than" in Thua Thien Province ad Hue City1.pdf](http://www.vvfh.org/uploads/List%20of%20Civilians%20Massacred%20by%20the%20Communists%20During%20Tet%20Mau%20Than%20in%20Thua%20Thien%20Province%20ad%20Hue%20City1.pdf)>

<[http://www.vvfh.org/uploads/List of Civilians Massacred by the Communists During "Tet Mau Than" in Thua Thien Province ad Hue City2.pdf](http://www.vvfh.org/uploads/List%20of%20Civilians%20Massacred%20by%20the%20Communists%20During%20Tet%20Mau%20Than%20in%20Thua%20Thien%20Province%20ad%20Hue%20City2.pdf)>

³³ Study 118

³⁴ Communist Document Tells of Civilian Massacre At Hue, 27 November 1968, Folder 09, Box 11, Douglas Pike Collection: Unit 02 - Military Operations, The Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University. Accessed 27 Apr. 2014. <<http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/virtualarchive/items.php?item=2131109007>>.

³⁵ Here the communists cite 2803 specific individuals and “many non-commissioned officers”.

³⁶ Hosmer, Stephen T. (May 1970). "Viet Cong Repression and Its Implications For the Future". *The Rand Corporation*. Retrieved 30 April 2014.

<http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/reports/2008/R475.1.pdf> 72

³⁷ Vennema 191

³⁸ Study 115-116

³⁹ Hosmer 73

⁴⁰ Vennema 191

⁴¹ Vennema 191-192

⁴² Hosmer 73

⁴³ Study 7

⁴⁴ Washington Post Staff Writer By, Don Oberdorfer. "68 Killings by Vietcong are Detailed." *The Washington Post, Times Herald (1959-1973)*: 1. Dec 07 1969. *ProQuest*. Web. 1 May 2014 .

⁴⁵ Communist Massacre of Civilians At Hue, Dees, Joseph L. IPS 26 January 1971, Folder 09, Box 11, Douglas Pike Collection: Unit 02 - Military Operations, The Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University. Accessed 8 May. 2014. <<http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/virtualarchive/items.php?item=2131109003>>.

⁴⁶ Report - The 1968 Tet Offensive and Uprising in Tri-Thien-Hue, March 1986, Folder 12, Box 16, Garnett Bell Collection, The Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University. Accessed 17 Apr. 2014.

<<http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/virtualarchive/items.php?item=11271612001>>. 10

⁴⁷ Richburg, K. B., (1988, Feb 03). 20 years after hue, vietnamese admit 'mistakes'. *The Washington Post (1974-Current File)*. A8 Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/139802229>

⁴⁸ Bernard Weinraub. "Death Holds Hue in a Quiet Agony." *New York Times (1923-Current file)*: 1. Mar 01 1968. *ProQuest*. Web. 2 May 2014 .

⁴⁹ Study 46

⁵⁰ Study 46

⁵¹ Vennema 137

⁵² Vennema 131-132

⁵³ Study 48

⁵⁴ Vennema 131

⁵⁵ Publication - Hue Massacre, 1968-1998, in English and Vietnamese - includes personal note and newspaper articles in Vietnamese, No Date, Folder 03, Box 01, Lu Lan Collection, The Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University. Accessed 22 Apr. 2014.

<<http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/virtualarchive/items.php?item=19350103001>>. 31

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- ⁵⁶ Email from LTC Ronald Bower AUS (ret) to Col Wayne Morris USMC (ret) forwarded to me on 4/13/2014 in response to a request for eyewitnesses to the massacre. In a follow-up email LTC Bower confirmed that they were US Marines and that he had not personally seen the graves or the bodies but was made aware of it by an inbrief of his area of responsibility.
- ⁵⁷ Study 12
- ⁵⁸ Pike 51
- ⁵⁹ Study 13
- ⁶⁰ Nguyen Ly Tuong Witness of the Massacre at Hue, 1968 08 Mar 2009 Web 16 Apr 2014 <http://www.vlink.com/mauthan/index.php?subaction=showfull&id=1236530105&archive=&start_from=&ucat=1&>
- ⁶¹ The Massacre in Hue: A Preview of What a Viet Cong Victory Would Mean <[http://www.vvfh.org/uploads/Report on Hue massacres.pdf](http://www.vvfh.org/uploads/Report%20on%20Hue%20massacres.pdf) 8
- ⁶² Ohman, Robert, (1969, Apr 13). Escapee Recalls Hue Killings:Massacre by Vietcong. *The Washington Post, Times Herald*. 19
- ⁶³ Appendix A tracks accounts written by Alje Vennema, an NVA supporter, Douglas Pike, a US employee, a RVN report and several other accounts.
- ⁶⁴ Pike's number in column C. Vennema's lower number ignores all of the Salt Flats finds from November 1969. If those were added in, his total would be more than 3,000.
- ⁶⁵ List of Civilians
- ⁶⁶ "The Massacre at Hue" Time Magazine, October 31, 1969 Web 29 April 2014 <<http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/HIUS316/mbase/docs/hue.html>>
- ⁶⁷ Bowers email
- ⁶⁸ "Wire Led to Discovery of Massacre". *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, TX). UPI. (1969, March 30). p. 2.
- ⁶⁹ Study 50
- ⁷⁰ Study (64) lists 577 unidentified, 72 more were unidentified at Da Mai Creek. 170 more were unidentified in the Salt Flat Finds (101).
- ⁷¹ Tran Gia Phung, translated by Ton Dzien 2008 Web 23 April 2014 <<http://www.truyen-thong.org/so26/118.html>>
- ⁷² Fallaci, Oriana (February 1972). "Working Up To Killing". *Washington Monthly*: 39-46. Retrieved 25 April 2014. <<http://www.unz.org/Pub/WashingtonMonthly-1972feb-00039>>
- ⁷³ Study 47
- ⁷⁴ The Battle for Hue, 1968, 08 March 1965, Folder 02, Box 01, James Willbanks Collection, The Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University. Accessed 10 May. 2014. <<http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/virtualarchive/items.php?item=3400102005>>. 34
- ⁷⁵ Communist Massacre of Civilians at Hue
- ⁷⁶ Oberdorfer, Don Tet! New York:Doubleday (Sept 1971) 250
- ⁷⁷ Karnow, Stanley. Vietnam A History. New York:The Viking Press 1983 531
- ⁷⁸ Young, Marilyn Blatt. The Vietnam Wars 1945-1990. New York:HarperCollins Publishers 1991 219

⁷⁹ Laderman, Scott. *Tours of Vietnam: War, Travel Guides and Memory*. Chapel Hill, NC:Duke University Press Books (2009) 94

⁸⁰ HUE CHIEF ISSUES EXECUTION ORDER: Mayor Says Some Enemy Agents Face ... By The Associated Press New York Times (1923-Current file); Feb 21, 1968; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2010) pg. 1

⁸¹ Court Planned in Hue To Try Enemy Agents New York Times (1923-Current file); Feb 22, 1968; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2010) pg. 11

⁸² Gen. Loan Off to Hue To Question Suspects New York Times (1923-Current file); Feb 23, 1968; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2010) pg. 3

⁸³ In Hue, Graves Disclose Executions by the Enemy New York Times (1923-Current file); Mar 28, 1968; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2010) pg. 4

⁸⁴ Porter, D. Gareth and Herman, Edward *The Myth of the Hue Massacre* Ramparts Magazine Vol. 13, No. 8, May-June 1975 2

Author of the report	Vennema	Pike	GVN	The Massacre In Hue	US News Release
Date of report	1976	Feb-70			4/30/68
Date	2/26/1968 - 3/16/1968	2/26/68	2/68-3/68		2/26-3/18
Location	Gia Hoi Secondary School	Gia Hoi Secondary School	Gia Hoi Secondary School	Gia Hoa High School and Tang Quang Pagoda	Gia Hoa High School
Graves	14 (in front - more found)	22	22	33	22
Bodies	203	170	425	200	200
Condition	Legs & hands tied, buried alive, shot in the head		hands tied, bludgeoned, shot in the head, buried alive		Many bound and shot, more than half buried alive
Occupations	street vendor, student, policemen, ARVN officers and enlisted		police, civil servants, militia, ARVN, teachers, private sector	Nguyen Quoc Ky	
Page Number	129-131	47	52-53	5	1
Date					3/2/68
Location					Gia Hoa Primary School
Graves					3
Bodies					10
Condition					Shot
Occupations					VQND leader
Page Number					1
Date					From 3/1
Location	Theravada Pagoda (Tang Quang Tu)	Tang Quang Tu Pagoda	Tang Quang Tu Pagoda		Tang Quang Tu Pagoda
Graves	12	13	13		13
Bodies	43	67	299		67
Condition	arms bound, shot in the head		hands tied, bludgeoned, shot in the head, buried alive		Shot, Nguyen Quoc Xy included
Occupations	tailor, contractor				1
Page Number	131-132	47	53		
Date					3/7-3/17
Location	Con Mo Bai Dau tomb	Bai Dau	Con Mo Bai Dau tomb		Bai Dau, Con Mo
Graves	3		8		8
Bodies	25	77	104		77
Condition	hands tied, shot in the head, buried alive		shot in the head, wire or rope bindings, 3 Koreans, 1 Chinese		Tied, shot through back of head, British subject, 3 Koreans
Occupations	civil servant				
Page Number	131-132	47	53-54		1
Date	2/28/68				
Location	Con Hen Island				
Graves	1				
Bodies	101				
Condition	Some had battle damage, some shot in the head				
Occupations	civil servants, PAVN, PLAF, ARVN				
Page Number	132-133				
Date	2/9/68				
Location	Catholic seminary				
Graves	2				
Bodies	6				
Condition	hands tied				
Occupations	US Embassy employees, USAID employees, teacher				
Page Number	133				
Date	3/10/68				
Location	Quan Ta Ngan				
Graves	3				
Bodies	21				
Condition	hands tied, shot in the head				
Occupations					
Page Number	133				
Date	3/14/68		3/14/68		
Location	5 miles east of Hue		10 km east of Hue		
Graves	1		25		
Bodies	25		100		
Condition	hands tied, shot in the head				
Occupations					
Page Number	133		57		
Date	3/19/1968-6/1969		3/19/1968 - 3/23/68		3/19-3/27
Location	Imperial tombs	Imperial tombs	Imperial tombs	slope of the Perfume River	Imperial Tombs
Graves	as many as 20, 1 or 2, sometimes 3, per grave	201	20+		20
Bodies	203	201	201	201	201
Condition	shot in the head				Many buried alive, others shot, tied together 10-15
Occupations	hamlet chief, civilian clothes, uniform, student, Fathers Urbain and Guy		hamlet chief, priests, religious students, teachers	Fathers Urbain and Guy	Fathers Urbain and Guy
Page Number	133-135	47	57-58	6	2
Date	3/1/68				28-Feb
Location	An Ninh bridge		An Ninh Ha bridge	An Ninh Bridge	An Ninh Ha
Graves	1		2		2
Bodies	20		50	20	50
Condition	hands tied, buried alive		buried alive		
Occupations	ARVN, local defense force				
Page Number	135		56	7	1
Date	3/5/68				
Location	Dong Ba gate				
Graves	1				
Bodies	7				
Condition					
Occupations					
Page Number	135				
Date	3/17/68				
Location	An Ninh Ha Elementary School				
Graves	1				
Bodies	4				
Condition	shot in the head				
Occupations	policeman, student, ARVN				
Page Number	135-136				
Date	3/10/68		3/9/68		3/10/68
Location	Van Chi school		Van Chi school		Van Chi School, Duong Xuan Ha
Graves	1		1		1
Bodies	8		9		9
Condition					invited to a political meeting
Occupations	mechanic, student, ARVN				local workers
Page Number	136		57		2
Date	3/1/68				2/2 ??
Location	Cho Thong marketplace	Cho Thong marketplace	Cho Thong marketplace		Cho Thong
Graves					
Bodies	102	100	100		100
Condition	hands tied, shot in the head				
Occupations	bricklayer, women				
Page Number	136	47	56		1
Date	3/25/68				22-Mar
Location	Thien Ham		Thien Ham		Thien Ham, slope of the Perfume River
Graves	several				Numerous
Bodies	200	200	250		200
Condition	hands tied, shot in the head				
Occupations	students, ARVN, civil servants, woman				Nearly 500 bodies, 40 women
Page Number	136-137	47	58		2
Date	4/2/68		4/2/68	4/2/68	12-Apr
Location	2.5 km southwest of Hue			Tu Quang Pagoda	Tu Quang Pagoda
Graves	1		1		1
Bodies	4		4	4	4

Condition			bound and shot		arms bound and shot		Shot
Occupations	German doctors and wife		German doctors and wife		German doctors and wife		German doctors and wife
Page Number	137		60		6		4
Date	4/1/68		3/8/68				8-Apr
Location	Dong Gi		Ap Dong Gi Tay		Ap Tong Gi Tay		Ap Tay Ho and Ap Tong Gi Tay
Graves							35
Bodies	110	100	75		75		175
Condition	hands tied, buried alive						Shot, clubbed, buried alive
Occupations	students, military, civil servants						
Page Number	137	47	57		7		3
Early Finds - 4/68	1083	915	1617		500		1093
Date	1/1969-9/1969						
Location	Vinh Tai village						
Graves			25				
Bodies	135		100				
Condition	hands tied						
Occupations	students, civil servants, ARVN, priests, novices, seminarians						
Page Number	137-139						
Date	1/1969-9/1969						
Location	Phy Luong village						
Graves							
Bodies	22						
Condition							
Occupations	students, civil servants, ARVN, priests, novices, seminarians						
Page Number	137-139						
Date	1/1969-9/1969	1st 7 months of 69	3/25/68-4/28/68				
Location	Phy Xuan village	Sand Dune Finds			Sand Dunes		
Graves			47				
Bodies	587	809	809		356		
Condition	hands tied, shot in the head		232 identified, 577 not				
Occupations	students, civil servants, ARVN, priests, novices, seminarians						
Page Number	137-139	47-49	64				
Date	4/1969-6/1969						
Location	Thuong Hue village, Vinh Hung village						
Graves							
Bodies	70						
Condition	some executed, some war deaths						
Occupations							
Page Number	139						
2nd Group of Finds	914	809	909		356		0
Date	Sep-69		Sep-68				
Location	Da Mai creek	Da Mai creek	Da Mai Creek				
Graves							
Bodies	500	428	500				
Condition	skulls with blunt force trauma, bones	identified	bones, machine gunned, drowned and grenades				
Occupations	military, students, civil servants, religious students						
Page Number	139-141	49-50	76-89				
Date							
Location		Luong Vien					
Graves							
Bodies		650					
Condition		300-1000 bodies					
Occupations							
Page Number		50-51					
Date							28-Feb
Location			Xa Huong Luong				Xa Huong Luong
Graves							
Bodies			25				25
Condition			beheaded				Some beheaded
Occupations							
Page Number			56				1
Date			3/9/68				Mid-March
Location			Duong Xuan Thuong				Duong Xuan Thuong
Graves			1				1
Bodies			8				8
Condition							Buried alive, including 60-year-old teacher, father of 9
Occupations							teacher
Page Number			57				2
Date			Mar-68				
Location			Luong Tho village				
Graves							
Bodies			30				
Condition							
Occupations							
Page Number			57				
Date			3/19-68-3/23/68				
Location			slope of the Perfume River				
Graves							
Bodies			250				
Condition			shot, clubbed, buried alive, hands and feet tied				
Occupations			hamlet chief, priests, religious students, teachers				
Page Number			58				
Date			Mar-68				March-April
Location			Khai Dinh's tomb				Khai Dinh's tomb
Graves							
Bodies			50				Numerous
Condition							50
Occupations			villagers, hamlet chiefs and their wives				Hamlet chiefs and wives
Page Number			59-60				3
Date			4/8/68				3-Apr
Location			3 km east of the An Cuu market		Ap Long Xa Con		Ap Long Xa Con
Graves			4				4
Bodies			20		30		60
Condition			bound and shot		buried alive, hands bound		hands bound, buried alive
Occupations			Senator Tran Dien		Senator Tran Dien		Senator Tran Dien
Page Number			60-61		6		4
Date			4/15/68				
Location			Various individual graves				
Graves			53				
Bodies			53				
Condition			shot				
Occupations							
Page Number			61				
Date			Jul-69				
Location			Near the village of Nguyet Bieu				
Graves			1				
Bodies			5				
Condition							
Occupations							
Page Number			75				
Date			Jul-69				Mid-March
Location			A short distance upstream from Nam Hoa				Nam Hoa

