INTERVIEW WITH VIETNAM WAR PARTICIPANT

W FILE / SUBJ. WI
DATE / SUB-CAT.
1/25/72

NAME LE VAN MINH (PAVN)

BACKGROUND Private First Class, Production Unit C-7, NVA 145th Battalion (Tuyen Duc Province)

SUBJECT: (B) Conscription in North Vietnam

SOURCE SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES & ANALYSES LIMITED (For JUSPAO)

SEASA

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Rallier Report 14-B - 72

Interview

of

Rallier LE VAN MINH
Private First Class
Production Unit C.7

B. CONSCRIPTION IN NVN

Interviewer : Phan Thi Hue
Date of Interview : 25 January 1972
Translator : Luong Hue Duong

Interview

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Rallier LE VAN ANNIE
Private First Class
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B. CONSCRIPTION IN NVN

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a) Generalities

1. How are NVN youths called up for their military service ?

   - A draft notice is sent to their home asking them to report for military service.

2. Who sends them their draft notices, local authorities or the Defense Ministry ?

   - Draft notices are prepared at central level and sent down from the province to the district and to the village.

3. Who signs them ?

   - They are signed by the Central Command Committee and sent down through local province, district and village agencies.

4. When did you receive your draft notice ?

   - In January 1969.

5. What was your occupation at that time ?

   - I was doing farm work in my village then.

6. Were you working for your family or for the cooperative ?

   - For the cooperative.

7. How much land did you have to work on ?

   - I didn't own any land of my own, and wasn't given any by the cooperative. I worked as a full time farmer for the

C. Conscription/Draft

a) Conscripts

1. How are TVRN people called up for their military service ?

- A draft notice is sent to their home asking them to report for military service.

2. Who sends them their draft notices, local authorities or Defense Ministry ?

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- They are signed by the Central Command Committee and sent down through local province, district and village agencies.

4. When did you receive your draft notice ?

- In January 1989.

5. What was your occupation at that time ?

- I was doing farm work in my village then.

6. Were you working for your family or for the cooperative ?

- For the cooperative.

7. How much land did you have to work on ?

- I didn't own any land of my own, and wasn't paid for my cooperative. I worked on a full time farmer for the

cooperative and was paid in paddy in proportion to the total of marks I'd achieved. The harder one worked, the higher mark one would have achieved and the greater the amount of paddy one would take home. A farmer who had achieved a total of 50 in a month would take home 50kgs of paddy that month.

8. How were your family's living conditions before and after you joined the cooperative ?

- Our living conditions remained unchanged after we joined the cooperative, but after we joined we had to work harder and weren't free to work as we liked.

9. To go back to conscription in NVN. Please tell me, what was your initial reaction on receiving your draft notice ?

- I was very upset and concerned about what was awaiting me in the army. I felt quite depressed then.

10. Did you make any attempt to dodge the draft ?

- Actually, I did think about it, but I came to realize that there was no way to escape it.

11. Why ?

- I couldn't, for instance, stay at home in the village without being arrested and sent off to a reformatory camp for failing to report for induction.

cooperative and was said in reply to proportion to the total of marks (%) achieved. The farmer who worked, the higher mark one would have achieved and the greater the amount of money one would take home. A farmer who had achieved a total of 50 in a month would take more shillings of money that month.

6. How were your family's living conditions before and after you joined the cooperative ?

- Our living conditions remained unchanged after we joined the cooperative, but after we joined we had to work harder and weren't free to work as we liked.

7. To go back to conscription in NYK. Please tell me, what was your initial reaction on receiving your draft notice ?

- I was very upset and concerned about what was awaiting me in the army. I felt quite depressed then.

10. Did you make any attempt to dodge the draft ?

- Actually, I did think about it, but I came to realize that there was no way to escape it.

11. Why ?

- I couldn't, the instance, why as there is no village wide being arrested who was not to a relative where could not hide, to report the incident.

12. Did many other youths think of dodging the draft as you did ?

- Generally speaking, the majority of youths would like to dodge the draft, but as I said, there was no way to escape.

13. You said the majority. Can you be more specific and give a figure ? Who were the men who would like to dodge the draft ? What would their social background be ?

- Generally speaking, all draft age men, including cadres, who were called up would like to dodge the draft, but there was nothing they could do.

14. Why was it impossible to dodge the draft ? Was it because of the tight government control ?

- Yes, it was because of their tight control.

15. How was this control exercised ? Was the control over the civilian population as tight as that applied in the army ?

- It was impossible to dodge the draft in order to stay home, for sooner or later the draft dodger would be caught by the authorities and sent to a reform camp.

16. Earlier you said you tried to dodge the draft but failed, and in the end, reported for induction. What did you do then to dodge the draft ?

- I initially thought of dodging the draft, but I knew I would certainly be arrested if I were to remain in my village,

12. Did many other youths think of dodging the draft as you did?

- Generally speaking, the majority of youths would like to dodge the draft, but as I said, there was no way to escape.

13. You said the majority. Can you be more specific and give a figure? Who were the men who would like to dodge the draft? What would their social background be?

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16. Earlier you said you tried to dodge the draft but failed, and in the end, returned for induction. What did you do trying to dodge the draft?

- I initially hoped of dodging the draft, but I toward [illegible] certainly be arrested if I were to see him in my village.

and would have to face severe disciplinary measures. And so, I gave up the idea.

17. Why did you want to dodge the draft ?

- Because I didn't want to go into the army and be sent south to fight and go through hardships and face dangers and death.

18. Did many people feel the same ?

- Generally speaking, yes. The majority of the rank-and-file felt the same. So did our squad and platoon cadres.

19. Why did you give up the idea of dodging the draft in the end ?

- Because I realized that everyone would have to join the army sooner or later. I wouldn't have the chance to do otherwise. Thus, willy nilly, I had to comply.

20. What were your feelings about joining the army then ? Did you regard it as a manifestation of patriotism ?

- To me, people joined the army because they were forced to in a very clever way. They didn't join out of patriotism. Many were very much against it, but there was nothing they could do. At that time all men between 18 and 35 were drafted unless they enlisted of their own free will.

21. Was your wife happy about your joining the army ?

- No, she wasn't.

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so, I gave up the idea.

Q. Why did you want to dodge the draft ?

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to fight and go through hardships and face dangers and death.

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could do. At that time all men between 18 and 35 were drafted
whether they wanted to of their own free will.

Q. Was your wife happy among your joining the army ?

- No, she wasn't.

22. And your family ?

- My family didn't want me to leave them for the army, but since everybody else was joining the army, there couldn't be an exception for me.

23. What did your wife think of your conscription ?

- She was very concerned about the hardships I would endure and was anxious about the risk to my life. That was why she did not want me to go.

24. What advice did she give you before you joined the army ?

- She told me to try to carry out my work as best as I could. She also said I should find ways and means to stay alive so that once peace is restored we could be reunited. She cautioned me against engaging head-on in a fierce battle against the enemy because of the risk of being killed in action and the terrible prospect of our never seeing each other again. She was really upset and made lots of complaints.

25. Did she advise you to dodge the draft ?

- Yes, she did, but I was afraid to follow her advice.

26. Why ?

- Because I knew it was of no use for me to dodge the draft and go back to our locality to live. I would certainly be

[illegible]

arrested and sent to a reform camp, and my family would have to bear the consequences.

27. Didn't your family take any steps to obtain a draft deferment for you ?

- There was no chance to obtain a deferment.

28. Was anyone you knew given a deferment ?

- No. There simply was no deferment at all. All able-bodied men from 18 to 35 had to do their military service.

29. What about physically incapacitated or crippled people ?

- Of course, these people didn't have to fulfil their military obligation.

30. After your induction and while you were undergoing training did anyone try to talk you into deserting ?

- While we were undergoing training, some of the guys who were with me talked me into deserting for home, but I was too scared.

31. Who talked you into deserting for home ?

- Some of the guys who were with me wanted to desert, and asked me to come along with them, but I refused, and later they left without me.

32. Did many desert ? How many exactly ?

- About 40% of the new recruits.

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31. Who talked you into deserting for home ?

- Some of the guys who were with me wanted to desert, and asked me to come along with them, but I refused, and later they left without me.

32. Did many desert ? How many exactly ?

- Quite a few of the new recruits.

33. How old were the majority ? What was their social background ?

- The majority of them were middle and poor farmers who had not made it into the Party. Most of them were between 18 and 25. At that time they didn't have youths from bourgeois or landlord families in the army yet.

34. Were the deserters later caught and disciplined ?

- Yes, they were caught and sent to the reform camp.

35. Did any of them safely escape ? Do you know where the reform camp they were sent to was located ?

- No, I don't know.

36. What were your feelings when you received the order to go south ?

- Actually, I felt very elated when I received the order to go south.

37. Why did you feel elated about going south when in the beginning you wanted to dodge the draft because of the fear of being sent south ? Please explain yourself.

- Because by that time one might as well show excitement and enthusiasm at leaving and feel confident in the purpose of our mission, otherwise one would attract the cadres' attention and suspicion, and no good could come from this.

[illegible]

- [illegible]

[illegible]

- [illegible]

[illegible]

- [illegible]

[illegible]

- [illegible]

[illegible]

- [illegible]

[illegible]

- [illegible]

[illegible]

38. What propaganda did the cadres make for you to feel so elated about going south ?

- They motivated the troops due to go south by saying that peace will be restored within a year, that SVN will be completely liberated and the country reunified from North to South, and that up to that time, four-fifths of SVN had already been liberated, etc. They incited us by saying that if we waited longer we might not have a chance to take part in the fighting and that we might be assigned to clear up the battlefield only.

39. While in the North at the time you were working for the cooperative, did you see many of your friends and acquaintances join the army ?

- Yes, many of them did.

40. What were your feelings on seeing them leave ?

- I told to myself that the time would come when I too would follow in their footsteps.

41. Did you think that you would have a chance to return to the North after you learned you'd be sent south to fight ?

- I knew that once I was sent south, there was no chance for me to ever return to NVN. Everyone knew that one could expect to die sooner or later if one was sent south to fight.

38. What people made you believe made you to feel so about going south ?

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- I knew that once I was sent south, there was no chance for me to ever return to RVN. Everyone knew that one could expect to die sooner or later if one was sent south to fight.

42. If you were convinced that your trip south was a journey of no return, why were you excited and elated on receiving the order to go to SVN ?

- Because everyone was feeling excited and elated, and it would have been very awkward for me not to feel the same. I knew death was awaiting us in the South, and yet, I went ahead.

43. While in the North did you know of any men who deserted while undergoing training ?

- Yes. A number of youths deserted for home after they had completed their physical examination and were officially inducted into the army.

44. How many exactly ? Do you remember their names ?

- Very few. About 10% only. In my own village one of the draftees deserted, but I don't remember his name.

45. How did you come to know about this ?

- The deserter was a man from my own village, so I knew.

46. How did he desert ?

- As the three-month training period was about to end and the order to go to B (SVN) reached us, many of the new recruits deserted for home. Once home, they would say they had lost contact with their unit, and that was why they had to go back

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45. How did he desert ?

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home. All of them were subsequently arrested by local authorities and sent to reformatory camps, only to escape again.

47. How did you view these desertions ? Were you sympathetic with the deserters, or on the contrary, very critical of their action ?

- I was not yet in the army when that guy from my village deserted. Personally, I didn't view his desertion with a critical eye because I wasn't even sure I would not do the same were I to be in his position.

48. Did you know of any sons of high ranking cadres dodging the draft ?

- A great many sons of cadres dodged the draft because most of the time they could get away with it without being disciplined.

49. Can you cite some specific cases ? When did they take place ? Who did they involve ? Can you give the names of the deserters ? Their parents ?

- I can mention one specific case involving a guy whose father was a cadre. When his group received the order to prepare for the trip south, he deserted for home.

50. Was he disciplined for this ?

zone. All of them were subsequently arrested by local authorities and sent to reformatory camps, only to escape again.

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18. Did you know of any zone of high ranking cadres during the draft ?

- A great many zone of cadres dodged the draft because most of the time they could get away with it without being disciplined.

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- I can mention one specific case involving a guy a whose father was a cadre. When his group received the order to prepare for the trip south, he deserted for home.

20. Was he disciplined for this ?

- No, he was not disciplined because he was the son of a cadre. Out of consideration for his father they only reprimanted him instead of taking disciplinary action against him.

51. What was the other men's reaction in the face of this unfair treatment ?

- They didn't show anything and didn't say anything because they knew it would have been of no avail.

52. Do you think cadres' sons were exempt from active duty in SVN ?

- No, because many of them had been sent south. However, quite a few were allowed to remain in the North.

53. Would the cadres with sons on active duty in the South be unhappy with this situation ? Why were their sons sent south and not the others ? Why did the cadres agree to let their sons go South ?

- Because cadres' sons were expected to set good examples, and their fathers were anxious to see them do so.

54. What was the percentage of cadres' sons serving in the South, and the percentage of those allowed to remain in NVN ?

- About 50 percent of cadres' sons are serving in SVN.

55. What would their total number be ?

- I can't say.

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71. What was the other zone's reaction to the face of this moral treatment ?

- They didn't know anything and didn't say anything because they knew it would have been of no avail.

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- Because cadres' sons were expected to set good examples, and their fathers were anxious to see them do so.

74. What was the percentage of cadres' sons serving in the South, and the percentage of those allowed to remain in NVN ?

- About 80 percent of cadres' sons are serving in SVN.

75. What would their total number be ?

- I can't say.

56. How did the ordinary youths feel about the exemption from active duty in SVN for the draft age sons of cadres ?

- They weren't very happy about this situation. They felt that as cadres' sons they should be sent south to set the example, and if they deserted they should be severely disciplined.

57. After your induction, did you ever contemplate desertion to avoid being sent to the South ?

- Yes, occasionally I would be tempted to desert, but my courage always failed me.

58. Why ?

- I was apprehensive about the consequences my family and I would have to bear. I knew we would be in trouble with the village authorities, and so, I decided to resign myself (to my fate).

59. Did you think that desertion would mean an act of disloyalty to the country ?

- No, I didn't see it that way, but other people would regard deserters as disloyal citizens.

60. How long after your induction were you told you would be sent south ?

- Three months.

35. How did the ordinary people feel about the examination from active duty in SVN for the draft age sons of cadres ?

- They weren't very happy about this situation. They felt that as cadres' sons they should be sent north to set the example, and if they deserted they should be severely disciplined.

37. After your indoctrination, did you ever contemplate desertion to avoid being sent to the South ?

- Yes, occasionally I would be tempted to desert, but my courage always failed me.

38. Why ?

- I was apprehensive about the consequences my family and I would have to bear. I knew we would be in trouble with the village authorities, and so, I decided to remain myself (to my fate).

39. Did you think that desertion would mean an act of disloyalty to the country ?

- No, I didn't see it that way, but other people would regard deserters as disloyal citizens.

40. How long after your indoctrination were you told you would be sent south ?

- Three months.

61. What were your feelings on learning that you would have to go south ?

- When I learned that I'd be sent south, I was very shaken. I was concerned about what would happen to me. I felt anxious, and my mind kept on thinking about one thing after another. I wished I could leave and go back home, and dreaded the trip south. Never before had I been so upset and worried. (This response contradicts the answer given in #36.)

62. What did your political cadres tell you about your trip to SVN ? What did they say your job in SVN was ? Were you expected to fight or only to pick up empty cans scattered on the battleground ?

- They told us that four-fifths of SVN's territory and three-fourths of its population had already been liberated, and because there was not much left to do we shouldn't delay unless we wanted to do the job of picking up empty cans on the battleground. They urged us to set off at once because there would no longer be a chance for us to fight. However, realities in SVN were quite different.

63. Did you believe in what you were told then ?

- Yes, we did, and completely too. The thing was, what we were told was in line with what was reported by the North

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Vietnamese press. We didn't give a care about the hardships we'd have to bear.

64. Did the other men in your unit also completely believe what they were told ?

- On the whole, we all believed. Every day, the press and the radio reported news of victories, and we couldn't help but believe everything we were told.

65. What was the reaction of your comrades when they learned that they'd have to go south to fight ?

- Outwardly they displayed enthusiasm, but deep inside them, they couldn't help feeling anxious.

66. How did they show their enthusiasm ?

- They were in a cheerful mood, but were careful not to show their real feelings.

67. What did they say after they learned they'd have to go south ?

- They told each other to expect never to return north once sent to SVN. They knew that but still had to go south.

68. Tell me about the meeting at which your leaders announced you'd all go south to fight. How did you receive the news ? In what mood where the majority of the men ?

- The majority of us were excited and full of enthusiasm. No one seemed to be either upset or unhappy at the news.

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In what mood where the majority of the men ?

- The majority of us were excited and full of enthusiasm. [illegible] the people [illegible] other upset or unhappy at the news.

However, deep inside the men, they were very concerned.

69. From what you could tell, what future did the men think they'd have in SVN ?

- The best they could hope for was to remain alive until after the liberation of SVN so they and their families would be entitled to fair compensation. This was grounds for their eagerness (to go South).

70. Did your cadres talk about the hardships you would have to face during your infiltration, or the fierceness of the war in SVN ?

- No mention was made about the hardships before we actually set off for the trip. However, soon after we set off, our cadres told us to expect difficulties during the infiltration, saying heavy fighting was going on in SVN. They urged us to keep up our courage and maintain our high combat spirit, and be determined to fight to the end even at the risk of our lives.

71. Who told you all this ?

- Company level political cadres.

72. Before leaving NVN, what was your attitude toward the war in SVN, and toward your infiltration ?

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72. Before leaving NVN, what was your attitude toward the war in SVN, and toward your infiltration ?

- I was convinced that our presence here would help restore peace in SVN. As for our infiltration, my feelings were that we are Vietnamese, and so, we were being sent south not as "infiltrators" but liberators. Our mission in SVN was not to commit aggression but to fight for the liberation of SVN. However, as I became more objective, I could see that the war was more devastating and had taken a heavier toll than the people thought, and that peace was still a long way off.

73. While in NVN, did you ever see wounded soldiers who had been evacuated from SVN ?

- I met one who was from my village.

74. Did he tell you what he saw in SVN ?

- I asked him questions, but he refused to speak. Had he told me what he had actually seen in SVN, I would have found ways and means to avoid active duty in SVN.

75. What were your impressions on seeing the wounded soldier from your village ?

- He had a few years of fighting in SVN, and so, in NVN he was entitled to State assistance and was given a job, and thus he had a good and secure life.

76. Was he disabled ?

- He had a broken jaw.

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76. Was he disabled ?

- He had a broken jaw.

77. Did all repatriated wounded soldiers refuse to tell their experiences in SVN ?

- Yes, they all did. They never said a word when asked.

78. Why so ?

- Because of the Front's military code of conduct. This code requires that the liberation soldier must only praise and not speak badly of the Front and everything related to it. Because of this the repatriated soldiers were afraid to tell the truth about SVN for fear we might lose our will.

b) Physical Examination

79. Now please tell me how the pre-induction physical exam of draftees proceeded. Who signed the order asking you to take your physical exam -- the Defense Ministry, the Province or the District ? How was it sent to you ?

- The letter was sent down from the Central to the local authorities who were in charge of delivering it. I don't remember who signed it.

80. How long after you received the letter asking you to take your physical exam did you actually take it ?

- Only a few days later. All men between 18 and 35 had to take a physical exam.

77. Did all repatriated wounded soldiers refuse to tell their experiences in SVN ?

- Yes, they all did. They never said a word when asked.

78. Why so ?

- Because of the Front's military code of conduct. This code requires that the liberation soldier must only praise and not speak badly of the Front and everything related to it. Because of this the repatriated soldiers were afraid to tell the truth about SVN for fear we might lose our will.

b) Physical Examination

79. Now please tell me how the pre-induction physical exam of trainees proceeded. Who signed the order asking you to take your physical exam -- the Defense Ministry, the Province or the District ? How was it sent to you ?

- The letter was sent down from the Central to the local authorities who were in charge of delivering it. I don't remember who signed it.

80. How long after you received the letter asking you to take your physical exam did you actually take it ?

- Only a few days later. All men between 18 and 20 had to take a physical exam.

81. Where ? Did all draft age men go to the same place for their physical check up ?

- No. Factory workers, for instance, took their physical exams at their factory.

82. Where did you take yours ?

- In An Xuong District.

83. Who sent the medical team in charge of checking your health -- the Ministry or the Army Medical Corps ?

- The Army Medical Corps.

84. Tell me about the medical team in charge of checking your physical condition ?

- There were medical nurses and doctors.

85. Did they have modern equipment and facilities for the physical exam ? Where did this equipment come from -- Russia, Czechoslovakia or Communist China ?

- The equipment was locally manufactured.

86. How many health categories did they have ?

- There were three categories A1, A2, and A3.

87. Who were in Category A1 ?

- Men in top physical condition.

88. And A2 ?

Q. Where ? Did all draft age men go to the same place for their physical check up ?

- No. Factory workers, for instance, took their physical exams at their factory.

Q. Where did you take yours ?

- In An Xuong District.

Q. Who was the medical team in charge of checking your health -- the Ministry or the Army Medical Corps ?

- The Army Medical Corps.

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Q. How many health categories did they have ?

- There were three categories A1, A2, and A3.

Q. Who were in Category A1 ?

- Men in top physical condition.

Q. And A2 ?

- Men with one physical defect of some kind or other. Men who were a little bit below average in height or weight were put in this category too.

89. What about A3 ?

- Men who were really below average in height and weight.

90. Who were put in Category B1 ?

- Men who were unqualified for the A3 Category.

91. What about men with a bad lung condition or TB, or with some chronic disease ? In what category were they put ?

- Men with TB or a chronic condition of one of the vital organs were listed in Category B3.

92. Who were in Category B2 ?

- Men with below average weight and height .

93. What about men with only one eye, or with one or more fingers missing ? In what category were they put ?

- These people didn't have to take their pre-induction physical exam.

94. Did you know anyone who didn't report for his physical exam ?

- No. No one could do that.

95. Did anyone try but fail ?

- No, it was no use trying.

- Men with one physical defect of some kind or other. Men who were a little bit below average in height or weight were put in this category too.

69. What about A3 ?

- Men who were really below average in height and weight.

70. Who were put in Category D1 ?

- Men who were unqualified for the A3 Category.

71. What about men with a bad lung condition or TB, or with some chronic disease ? In what category were they put ?

- Men with TB or a chronic condition of one of the vital organs were listed in Category B3.

72. Who were in Category B2 ?

- Men with below average weight and height .

73. What about men with only one eye, or with one or more fingers missing ? In what category were they put ?

- These people didn't have to take their pre-induction physical exam.

74. Did you know anyone who didn't report for his physical exam ?

- No. No one could do that.

75. Did anyone try but fail ?

- No, it was no use trying.

96. Did anyone take drugs to lower his blood pressure, or go on a special diet for months in the hope of disqualifying himself for military service ?

- These things never happen in NVN.

97. Did you ever wish to dodge your physical exam ?

- No, never.

98. After the physical exam were you sent home to wait for some time before induction, or were you taken away immediately ?

- I was sent home and was home for nearly three months before I was inducted.

99. Were you sent an order asking you to report for induction, or did you just go and present yourself for it ?

- An official order was sent to the village. It included a list of men who had taken their physical exam. My name was on that list.

100. Men in what health categories were drafted in 1965 ?

- In A1 and A2 Categories.

101. When you joined the army, men in what health categories were drafted ?

- When I joined the army, they even took Category B2 men. Only the B3's were exempt.

70. Did anyone take steps to lower his blood pressure, or go on a special diet for months in the hope of disqualifying himself for military service ?

- These things never happen in NYYM.

71. Did you ever wish to dodge your physical exam ?

- No, never.

72. After the physical exam were you sent home to wait for an induction before induction, or were you taken away immediately ?

- I was sent home and was home for nearly three months before I was inducted.

73. Were you sent an order saying you to report for induction, or did you just go and present yourself for it ?

- An official order was sent to the village. It included a list of men who had taken their physical exam. My name was on that list.

100. When in what health categories were created in 1965 ?

- In A1 and A2 categories.

101. When you joined the army, then in what health categories were graded ?

- When I joined the army, they even took category III men. Only the A3's were excluded.

102. Were Catholics also drafted at that time ?

- Yes. By that time, Catholics and Buddhists were no longer kept out.

103. How many men were drafted the year you joined the army ?

- About 300.

104. Who were not affected by the draft ?

- Children, women, men above 36, old men and disabled people.

105. Tell me about draft deferment in NVN ? When could a person be deferred? Could a deferment be obtained and who could get one ?

- Deferment was given to men over 36, and to draft age men who were physically incapacitated. Men with poor eyesight were also given a deferment until the next physical exam period.

106. Did anyone pay bribes in order to obtain a draft deferment ?

- No.

107. Why not ? Was it because of strict control ?

- Yes, control was very strict. It was impossible to pay bribes to get a deferment.

108. Did sons of high ranking cadres dodge the physical exam ?

- No, they didn't.

109. Was there any way to obtain a draft deferment after the physical exam ?

- The only way to get a deferment after the physical was to obtain an assignment at one of the vital service branches.

110. What service branches, for instance ?

- Administrative agencies or labor units where a deferment of six months to one year was usually granted.

c) Recruit Training

111. When and where did you assemble for the induction ?

- We were assembled in Thai Nguyen. It was in January 1969.

112. How long did you undergo training there and how many were there of you ?

- There were about 300 or so altogether to undergo three months of training.

113. Who was in charge of the training ?

- The training was given to each platoon by platoon cadres.

114. Were there barracks and a fixed training camp for the trainees ?

- Yes, we had a training camp for training.

115. Did you have a fixed training camp or did you have to move from one place to another ?

- It was a fixed training camp.

116. How large was the training camp and how was it equipped ? Did it have training facilities such as fortifications,

Q. When service terminates, for instance ?

- An informative agenda or labor units where a deferment of six months to one year was usually granted.

c) Recruit Training

Q. When and where did you assemble for the induction ?

- We were assembled in Thai Nguyen. It was in January 1953.

Q. How long did you undergo training there and how many were there of you ?

- There were about 300 or so although to undergo three months' of training.

Q. Who was in charge of the training ?

- The training was given to each platoon by platoon cadres.

Q. Were there barracks and a fixed training camp for the trainees ?

- Yes, we had a training camp for training.

Q. Did you have a fixed training camp or did you have to move from one place to another ?

- It was a fixed training camp.

Q. How active was the training camp and how is it equipped ? Did it have training facilities such as films/cinema.

communication trenches and a range for target practice ?

- There were some ready-made training facilities, but we had to dig communication trenches and put up targets.

117. Were you adequately supplied with ammo ? Were you allowed to keep your weapons ?

- We were issued weapons but not ammo. We were trained in infantry tactics.

118. What about discipline during training ?

- They believed in self-imposed discipline in the North.

119. What do you mean by self-imposed discipline ?

- It is what the term says it is. We each voluntarily abide by a set of rules, and any violation has to be recognized and corrected at once on our own will.

120. Were the trainees punished -- either by being forced to do so many push-ups, or by being locked up in a tiger cage -- for breaking discipline ?

- No, we were never forced to do push-ups or locked up in a tiger cage. Usually, a discipline violation was punished by criticism and self-criticism at a group criticism meeting during which the offender would have to admit his error and pledge to never commit it again.

[illegible]

- [illegible] for [illegible] facilities, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible]

- [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

121. After their induction, were draftees indiscriminately grouped into squads, or were they grouped according to certain criteria, -- social background, qualifications, etc ?

- A men who had held an important civilian (technical) position before he joined the army would retain that specialty in the military ranks.

122. Describe for me one typical day at a military training school in NVN at the time you were undergoing training ?

- We had military drills from 6 to 11 A.M. After that came lunch and siesta break. The training resumed at two in the afternoon, and went on until five. At night, we had political courses.

123. Who was in charge of the mess ?

- A company mess cell.

124. Was the food adequate ?

- Yes, it was.

125. What were your food and pocket money allowances ?

- The daily food allowance was NVN$ 0.9 per head, and the monthly pocket money allowance was NVN$ 6 for a soldier, and NVN$ 45 for an officer.

126. Did you have adequate medical care ?

[illegible]

[illegible] Which of the following, more [illegible] directly [illegible]

[illegible] or were they [illegible] occur? Consider

[illegible], -- social [illegible], [illegible] time, etc.?

- [illegible] [illegible] a [illegible] child's (the child) [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

- On the whole, medical supplies were adequate. We were given reasonably good medical care in times of sickness.

127. What was the most common sickness at your military training school ?

- Usually colds and influenza.

128. Were there any cases of accident injuries, due to explosion of hand grenades, for example ?

- No, very rarely.

129. Did such accidents ever occur though ?

- Yes, Once a trainee fired a weapon which he thought was unloaded, and wounded a man standing in front of him.

130. What type of ammo did you have for firing practice ? Did accidents ever occur during firing practice ?

- We had live ammo, and so, accidents occasionally occurred.

131. When did such an accident occur ? Who caused it ? Do you remember his name ? Was he disciplined for that ?

- I don't remember his name. He was demoted. The accident occurred in 1969.

132. Was this case brought up at meetings for discussion to caution the men during training ?

- Yes, it was brought up at meetings.

- On the whole, medical supplies were adequate. We were given reasonably good medical care in times of sickness.

127. What was the medical care you received during military training as well ?

- Usually colds and influenza.

128. Were there any cases of accident injuries, the by explosion of hand grenades, for example ?

- No, very rarely.

129. Did such accidents ever occur frequently ?

- Yes, once a trainee lost a woman while he was unloaded, and wounded a non-commission in front of it.

130. What type of arms did you have for firing practice ? Did accidents ever occur during firing practice ?

- We had live ammo, and so, accidents occasionally occurred.

131. When did such an accident occur ? Who caused it ? Do you remember his name ? Was he disciplined for that ?

- I don't remember his name. He was a soldier. The accident occurred in 1969.

132. Was this case enough to be reported for discussion to senior officers during training ?

- Yes, it was brought to my attention.

133. What did you learn during your three months of training ?

- Ambush and raid tactics, and markmanship.

134. What regulations did the trainees have to follow in their daily life ?

- The fighters were required to follow a set of ethical rules. They were urged to put all their hearts and minds on their studies and training, to endeavor to maintain a high morale, to avoid quarrels and fist-fights, and to strictly observe military discipline, etc.

135. Did you have any cultural entertainment during your training period ?

- Yes, every night.

136. What kind of cultural entertainment did you have ?

- Singing and classifical music.

137. Who gave performances -- the trainees themselves, or an entertainment troupe from outside ?

- The trainees themselves.

138. In what state of mind were the trainees after a political indoctrination session ? Were they happy, or on the contrary, tired and fed up ?

- Usually we had cultural entertainment performances after a political training session, and so, everybody felt relaxed

125. What did you listen to, play, read, see, write or think of?

- Nothing, not yet. Perhaps, my rehearsals.

126. What resolutions did the students have to follow in their daily life?

- The Masters were required to follow a set of ethical rules. They were urged to put all their hearts and minds on their studies and training, to endeavor to maintain a high moral, to avoid quarrels and fist-fights, and to strictly observe military discipline, etc.

127. Did you have any cultural entertainment during your training period?

- Yes, every night.

128. What kind of cultural entertainment did you have?

- Singing and classical music.

129. Who were performances -- the trainees themselves, or a entertainment troupe from outside?

- The trainees themselves.

130. In what mode of dress were the trainees after a political indoctrination session? Were they happy, or on the contrary, tired and sad?

- Normally we had cultural entertainment after meals, after a political training session, etc., everyone felt relaxed.

and high-spirited.

139. Were political cadres regularly sent to your training school to make propaganda ? How often were they sent in a month ?

- They came regularly once a week to motivate us.

140. What did you do at the end of your training ? Where were you assigned ?

- We immediately began the preparations for the trip south.

141. Was a send-off party held before your departure ?

- Yes.

142. How long did it last ?

- Half a day.

134. Were speeches delivered on that occasion ?

- On such an occasion, the battalion commander would give his men a speech. He would speak of their mission in the South and urge them to live up to their responsibilities by maintaining high morale.

144. Were representatives of various organizations such as Combatants' Mothers or Combatants' Sisters Associations present at the send-off party to mobilize your spirit ?

- Yes. Representatives of local Combatants' Mothers chapters were present to see us off and motivate our morale.

[illegible] -[illegible].

13). Were political [illegible] regularly sent to your [illegible] school [illegible] ago [illegible]? How often were they sent in a month?

- Every [illegible] or [illegible] week to [illegible].

14). What did you do at the end of your [illegible]? Were [illegible] you [illegible]?

- We [illegible] [illegible] preparations for the [illegible].

15). Was a [illegible] party held before your departure?

- Yes.

16). [illegible] in [illegible]?

- [illegible] [illegible].

17). Were speeches delivered on that occasion?

- Yes [illegible] occasion, the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. We [illegible] speech. He would speak of their [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] responsibility [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

18). Were representatives of various organizations such as [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Students' [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

145. What did they say to you to motivate you ?

- In broad terms, they reminded us that we were being sent south to help liberate SVN, and therefore, we should put our minds on the accomplishment of our mission and not to worry about home, and to leave that to their care.

146. What were your feelings then ?

- I felt myself caught up in the general mood of the moment.

147. How did the other men feel ?

- They too felt elated and happy.

148. Earlier you said, your wife wasn't happy to see you leave. Did this upset you somewhat and spoil your departure ? Did you feel worried before leaving her ?

- As I said, my wife wasn't happy about my going away. This, of course, upset me, but outwardly I had to show enthusiasm. In reality I was not excited.

149. Did your family come to see you off ?

- Our families weren't told the exact date of our departure for SVN, and so, they couldn't come to see us off.

150. Why didn't you inform your family ?

[illegible]

16. [illegible] do you have [illegible]?

- [illegible] I'm [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

- We weren't given any home leave after assignment to our unit, and so there was no way to get in touch with our families and inform them about our trip south.

151. Did you say you weren't given any home leave after your induction ?

- No, we weren't given any home leave.

152. Did you have any contact with your family after your induction?

- Only through letters.

153. Did you resent the fact that you couldn't either visit or receive your family before your trip south ?

- From the time I was officially inducted into the army to the time we set off for the trip south, I wasn't given any home leave at all. Of course, I felt very upset. I was mad at the authorities because I knew that my trip south will be a journey of no return. I deeply resented the government for not allowing me to visit my family before I left. They were strict about home leaves before departure time because they were afraid the men would not show up after they'd gone home. There had been many such instances before, and so they had to take precautions.

154. Did the men in your infiltration group complain about the abolition of home leaves ?

- We weren't given any leave days after arrival in our unit, so we didn't see any way to get in contact with our families and inform them about our trip south.

171. Did you say you weren't given any leave after your induction?

- No, we weren't given any leave.

172. Did you have any contact with your family after your induction - only through letters.

173. Did you present the fact that you couldn't allow them to receive your family before your trip south?

- From the time I was officially informed into the army to the time we set off for the trip south, I weren't given any home leave at all. Of course, I felt very upset. I was also at the authorities because I knew that my trip south will be a journey of no return. I deeply regretted the lavish use for me allowing me to visit my family before I left. There were a which about hours leave before departure time. Actually that were times that the man would, I know my whole family come. Since that been many such instances taking place in the preparations.

174. Did you do in your indication to my complain any of the difficulties in a language?

- On the whole, they all felt unhappy about not being able to visit their families before leaving. Many felt quite depressed. However, there was nothing they could do.

155. Was there a heart-breaking good-bye when you left ?

- No, because when we boarded the train none of our relative were on hand to see us off. However, people standing on the station platform waved good-bye to us. Later as the train moved southward, women and girls working in the field also waved to show that they were with us. There was something both encouraging and desperate in their waving.

156. Did any of the men cry as he boarded the train ?

- Yes, a few cried.

157. Who were they ? What was their social background ? Their age ?

- The men were from all social strata. Some actually cried; either were deeply moved and could just barely control their tears. It is hard for any man to leave his family, no matter the circumstance.

158. To go back to conscription in 1965. Men from which social classes were drafted that year ? What about subsequent years ?

- Prior to 1965 they mostly drafted poor farmers, workers, high-school students and teachers. Between 1966 and 1969 they drafted men from all social classes. Only men from landlord families were not taken.

159. Why ? Were men from the landlord class considered undesirable ?

- They were considered hostile to the NVN regime. They have always been blacklisted anyway.

160. Men in what age group were drafted in 1965 -- and in 1969, the year you were drafted ?

- Prior to 1965, most of the new recruits were between 18 and 25. In subsequent years, most of the men were between 25 and 35.

161. Do you know why recently more older men -- between 25 and 35 -- were drafted ?

- In my opinion, it is because there were no longer so many men in the 18 to 25 age group left, and so they had to turn to the 25 - 35 group.

162. Were any boys of or under 16 taken into the army ?

- No. They won't be accepted.

163. Could they cheat and increase their age in order to be accepted ?

- [illegible] in 1951 they mostly [illegible] their [illegible], [illegible], [illegible]-rooms, students and [illegible]. Between 1950 and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] had [illegible] cleaned. Only [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] facilities were not [illegible].

(47). Why? Were [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]-[illegible]-[illegible]?

- They were considered [illegible] to be [illegible] [illegible]. [illegible] have always been [illegible] anyway.

(48). How [illegible] [illegible] were [illegible] in 1950 -- [illegible] [illegible], the year you were [illegible]?

- [illegible] 1950, [illegible] of the new [illegible] were [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. In [illegible] years, [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] 30.

(49). Do you know why [illegible] more [illegible] [illegible] -- [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] 30 -- were [illegible]?

- In my [illegible], it is [illegible] [illegible] were [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] - [illegible] years.

(50). [illegible] any [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]?

- [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

(51). [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

- Yes, they could. They were so eager to join the army that they would increase their age to make them old enough to be taken.

164. To your knowledge how many did that ?

- There were quite a few such cases.

165. How many ? Give a figure.

- Approximately 60 percent.

166. What were their motives for wanting to join the army before they had reached the right age ? Did they have problems with their families, or did they just like army life ?

- Because they were still very young and impulsive, they usually never gave much thought to what they did. Because they saw other youths joining the Army, they too wanted to do the same.

167. Wouldn't their families try to stop them ?

- I don't think so.

168. Do you remember the names of some of the boys who had to cheat to join the army because they were still too young ?

- No, I don't remember any names.

169. How would you compare the NVN youth's eagerness to take the physical in 1965 with that of later years ?

- Yes, they could. They were [illegible] to join the army if they wanted to. Many people would have to [illegible] to be taken.

Int. I was wondering how many did that?

- I am very sure quite a lot were taken.

Int. How many? Quite a lot?

- Approximately 60 percent.

Int. What were their motives for wanting to join the new [illegible]? Did they [illegible] the right age? Did they have problems with their families, or did they just like [illegible]?

- Because they were still very young and impulsive, they usually never give much thought to what they [illegible]. Looking back on how other people joining the army, they too were [illegible] to the [illegible].

Int. Wouldn't their families try to stop them?

- I don't think so.

Int. Do you remember the names of some of the [illegible] who chose to join the army because they were still too young?

- No, I don't remember any names.

Int. [illegible] you compare the [illegible] soldiers [illegible] in [illegible] [illegible]?

- As years went by, NVN youth became less enthusiastic about having to take the physical. However, because there was no way to avoid it, they had to feign enthusiasm.

170. Do you know why NVN youth became more and more reluctant to take the physical exam in later years ?

- Because they could see too many men had left for the south and none of them had returned. With the war raging on, they knew what to expect when their turn came to go south. They knew they would be killed and would never return north.

171. Did they know that heavy fighting was going on in SVN ?

- Yes, they knew.

172. While you were still in NVN, were families of soliders killed in action notified of their son's death ?

- No, they weren't. To my nowledge, no death was ever notified.

173. Do you mean the government never notified any deaths, and kept them all secret ?

- Yes. They never notified anyone.

174. Were families of outstanding soldiers sent certificates of their exploits ?

- Not to my knowledge.

- As years went by, [illegible] was less automatic and dealing in fine the physical. However, because there was an eye to secure [illegible], they had to delve behind [illegible].

Q. Do you know why [illegible] people became more educated to take the physical exam in later years?

- Because they could see too many men had lost for the [illegible] and made of their bad experience. With the war raging on, they knew what to expect when their turn came to go [illegible]. They knew they would be killed and would never return home.

Q. Did they know that heavy [illegible] was going on in [illegible]?

- Yes, they knew.

Q. While you were still in [illegible], were families of soldiers killed in action notified of their sons' or [illegible]?

- No, they weren't. To my knowledge, no [illegible] was ever notified.

Q. Do you mean the powers-that-never [illegible] for [illegible], and that [illegible] all [illegible]?

- Yes. They never notified any [illegible].

Q. Were families of [illegible] soldiers ever certificated of their [illegible]?

- Yes, [illegible].

175. Did families with sons on active duty in SVN ever complain about being kept in the dark about their sons' fate ?

- The majority of the people believed that their sons were dead, and few entertained the thought that they might still be alive. If they hadn't had any news from them for two to three years then they believed they'd been killed.

176. Youths of which social class and age group were the most enthusiastic about taking the physical exam ?

- Youths in the 18 - 25 age group were the most enthusiastic. Next came the 25 - 30 age group. The men in the 30-35 group were reluctant to take their physical, but because there was no way for them to escape, they couldn't help but comply. On the whole, rural youths were more keen on taking their physical than city boys.

177. Who among the new recruits showed the greatest endurance to withstand hardships during training ?

- Men from the poor farmer class. Next to them, were workers.

178. Who had the least stamina ?

- It all depended on the individual. Some of the boys from the poor farmer class could take less hardships than some of the students. One cannot draw a general conclusion on this point.

17. Did the lower class zone be active now in their own plain about going what in the [illegible] about their zone' lads ?

- The majority of the people believed that their zone was [illegible] and low waterfront, the [illegible] that they were [illegible] alive. If they didn't [illegible] any news from them for two to three years then they believed they'd been killed.

18. Tombs of which social class and age group were the most enthusiastic about taking the physical course ?

- Tombs in the 15 - 25 age group were the most enthusiastic, next come the 25 - 30 age group. The men in the 30+ group were satisfied to take it easy physical, but because there was no way for them to escape, they complied but grudgingly. On the whole, rural youths were more [illegible] than their physical than city boys.

19. Did among the new recruits a [illegible] the greatest [illegible] to [illegible] hardships during training ?

- Men from the poor farmer class. Next in [illegible], were [illegible].

20. Was [illegible] the least [illegible] ?

- It all depended on the individual. Some of the boys in the poor farmer class could take less hardship [illegible] the [illegible]. The common that [illegible] correction [illegible] [illegible].

21.

179. But earlier you just said that men from the poor farmer class showed the greatest endurance to hardships, and that after them were the workers. If so, you should be able to say also who showed the least endurance, shouldn't you ?

- On the whole, students and teachers could not stand hardships.

180. What positions did the men from rural areas hold in your unit ? What positions did the urban youths hold ? What was the average age and educational level of your leaders ? Please start with the rural youths.

- In the NVA, education does not count very much, and many men have risen to the top of the military hierarchy solely on account of their character and not their professional qualifications. Thus, we often have guys who can hardly read and write among our squad and platoon leaders. The majority of NVA troops are rural folks. Many of them are cadres of squad, platoon or higher level. Most of them belong to the basic classes -- very poor and poor farmers.

181. What about city folks ?

- Truly speaking, there are no longer city folks so to speak. They have become rural by adopting the rural people's living habits.

182. Since when ?

- Since 1969.

183. Do you have any Catholics in leadership positions in the NVA ?

- I don't know.

184. In the NVA which group shows the greatest insubordination ? Which group most often breaks discipline ?

- It all depends on the individual. Some men are more undisciplined than others. We have undisciplined elements among rural as well as city boys.

185. Did the trainees form cliques or factions at the time you underwent training ?

- Not in my unit.

186. Did the men ever quarrel with their superiors ? Did fistfights break out among the rank-and-file ?

- The troops would never dare quarrel with their superiors. They might quarrel with each other, but not with their cadres.

187. Can you relate one such incident ? When did it happen ? Were the men disciplined ?

- Once, two guys in my unit were engaged in a hot argument arising from a misunderstanding. Subsequently they were brought up to a cell meeting for criticism, and had to admit their error. I don't remember exactly when this incident took place.

141. Do you have any children (i.e. are I. nothing in the M - I don't know.

142. Is the MPA which you have the treated inmates [illegible] a lot, very much when [illegible] disciplin ?

- It all depends on the individual. Some a man are [illegible] disciplined man there. We have [illegible] also some where that is well as day [illegible].

143. Did the trainees have allowed or [illegible] at the time [illegible] [illegible] freedom ?

- Not in my unit.

144. Did the man ever [illegible] with their [illegible] ? Did [illegible] week and [illegible] the [illegible] ?

- The [illegible] would [illegible] [illegible] with their [illegible] [illegible]. They would [illegible] with each other, but not with [illegible] [illegible].

145. Can you relate one such [illegible] ? When did it happen ? Were the men disciplined ?

- Yes, two guys in [illegible] were engaged in a [illegible] relating from a [illegible]. Consequently they were [illegible] to be in a cell [illegible] the criminal, and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. I don't [illegible] exactly when this incident took place.

188. Were you ever oppressed or discriminated against by your superiors ?

- No, this thing can never happen in the army. Anyone, be he a cadre or soldier, who is at fault will be brought up to a group meeting for constructive criticism and self-criticism so he may improve himself.

189. While undergoing training, were you told of men deserting back to NVN after they had been sent south ?

- Yes, I was told this when I was in NVN. I heard that there had been a few cases of desertion back to NVN.

190. Were the deserters disciplined ?

- The deserters usually pretended that they had lost contact with their units, and had been forced to go back to NVN.

191 . Were they disciplined ? Did their families have to bear the consequences of their action ?

- They usually suffered a loss of political privileges.

192. Did political cadres approach their respective families, asking them to intervene with the deserters ?

- Yes. Usually political cadres were sent to ask the respective families to intervene and urge the deserters to go back to the army.

193. How many men deserted back to NVN ? Can you make an estimate?

- About 20 percent of the total effectives sent to the South. These deserters were usually called "B-dropouts."

194. Why B-dropouts ? Was this a disparaging term used by girls to ridicule deserters going back north ?

- The B-dropouts were those who deserted the B-Front to go back north.

195. Were these deserters sent to reform camps ?

- They were sent to the "Thu Dung" rehabilitation camp.

196. Where was the Thu Dung camp located ?

- When I was in NVN, it was located in Hanoi.

197. Did it look like a military or reform camp ?

- It was a special place for political reindoctrination.

198. Did you ever visit it ?

- No, never.

199. Do you know what the living conditions at this Thu Dung camp were like ? What activities did the inmates have ? What type of studies were they subjected to ?

- Inmates weren't given any military training here. They only attended political courses. They were subjected to intensive political indoctrination with the view of correcting their thoughts and political stand, until the time they made

- [illegible] of prisoners [illegible] collective work in the camps. [illegible] stations were usually called "b-groups."

Q. Were [illegible] in World War II a disciplinary term used by civilians in military stations and barracks?

- The b-groups were those who deserted the U.S. [illegible] to work.

Q. Where were deserters sent to which camps?

- They were sent to the "Lava Flow" rehabilitation ca[illegible].

Q. Where was the Lava Flow camp located?

- When I was in 1943, it was located in Hawaii.

Q. What it look like a military or prison camp?

- It was a special place for political rehabilitation.

Q. Did you ever visit it?

- No, never.

Q. [illegible] were the living conditions at this Lava Flow camp like? What activities did the inmates have? What [illegible] were they subjected to?

- Inmates weren't just any military prisoners. They only [illegible] political courses. They were subjected to [illegible] political indoctrination with the view of [illegible] their [illegible] political ideas, until we [illegible]

amends for their past errors. Only then were they reinstated, and allowed to go back to the army.

200. Were inmates given adequate food during their stay at the camp ?

- The daily food allowance per head was NVN$ 0.68; that is to say NVN$ 0.22 less than the ordinary soldier's food allowance.

201. How many became enlightened after having spent some time at this camp ? Where were they sent to from the camp ?

- All of them would eventually become enlightened. However, even so, they wouldn't be sent south again. They would go back to the army, though , and would be assigned to various units, such as tank, anti-aircraft or artillery units stationed in NVN.

202. Such lenient treatment of deserters would, to my mind, encourage more deserters from the NVA since the troops know that they could expect an assignment on the home front after a reindoctrination period at the Thu Dung camp. Do you know why NVA deserters were not reassigned to active duty in SVN ?

- In my opinion, it is because of the risk that they would desert again if sent south.

[illegible] for their meal service. Only base were [illegible] allowed to go [illegible] in the army.

[illegible] Were inmates [illegible] adequate food during their [illegible] camp ?

- The daily food allowance per head was [illegible] [illegible] to see [illegible] less than the military soldier's food allowance.

[illegible] many people collapsed after having spent [illegible] at this camp ? Where were they sent to from the camp ? All of them would eventually become collapsed. However, even so, they could not be sent again. They would [illegible] back to the army, though, and would be replaced by [illegible] units, such as tank, anti-aircraft or artillery units stationed in Kiev.

[illegible] Indeed treatment of deserters would, in my view, encourage more deserters from the NVA since the troops knew that they could expect no sanctions in [illegible] after a full orientation period at the [illegible] camp. [illegible] were not sufficient to solve [illegible] ?

- In my opinion, it is because of the [illegible] that they would desert again if sent back.