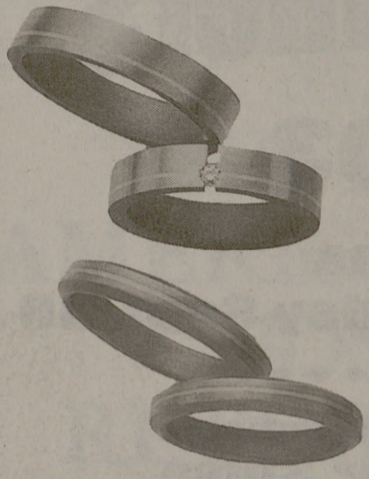


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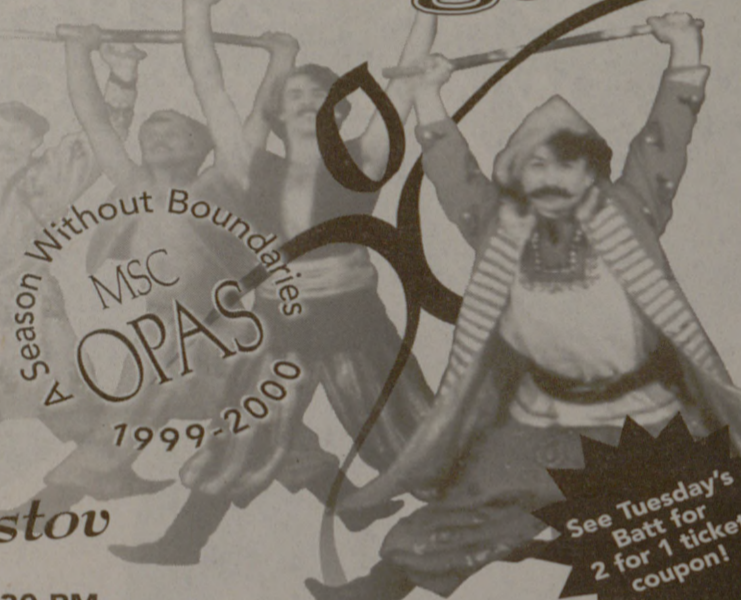
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## GIs recount Korea killing

American veterans admit to shooting civilian refugees

AP — It was a story no one wanted to hear: Early in the Korean War, villagers said, American soldiers machine-gunned hundreds of helpless civilians under a railroad bridge in the South Korean countryside.

When the families spoke out, seeking redress, they met only rejection and denial from the U.S. military and their own government in Seoul. Now a dozen ex-GIs have spoken, too, and support their story with haunting memories from a "forgotten" war.

American veterans of the Korean War said that in late July 1950, in the conflict's first weeks, U.S. troops killed a large number of South Korean refugees, many of them women and children, trapped beneath a bridge at a hamlet called No Gun Ri.

In interviews with the Associated Press, ex-GIs speak of 100 or 200 or "hundreds" dead. The Koreans, whose claim for compensation was rejected last year, said 300 were killed at the bridge and 100 in a preceding air attack.

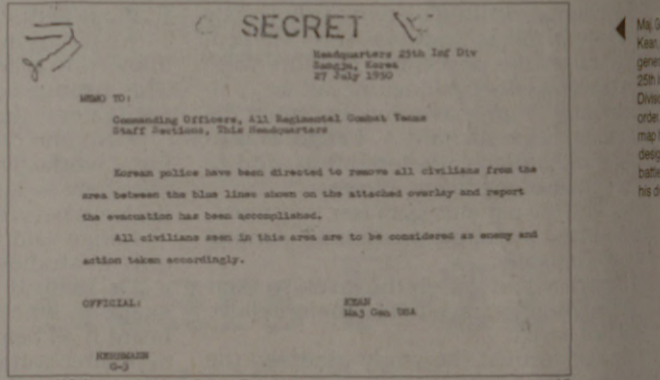
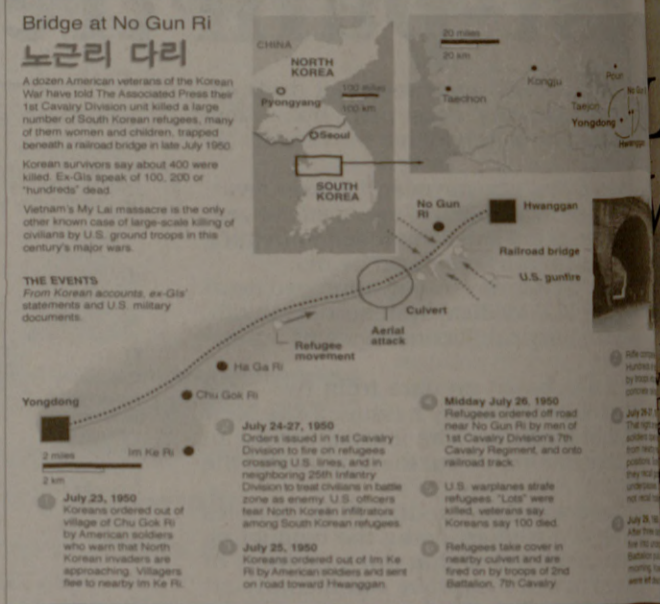
American soldiers, in their third day at the warfront, feared North Korean infiltrators among the fleeing South Korean peasants, veterans told the AP.

The ex-GIs described other refugee killings as well in the war's first weeks, when U.S. commanders ordered their troops to shoot civilians, citizens of an allied nation, as a defense against disguised enemy soldiers, according to once-classified documents found by the AP in U.S. military archives.

Six veterans of the 1st Cavalry Division said they fired on the civilians at No Gun Ri, and six others said they witnessed the mass killing.

"We just annihilated them," ex-machine gunner Norman Tinkler of Glasco, Kan., said.

After five decades, none gave a complete, detailed account. But the ex-GIs agreed on such elements as time and place, and on the preponderance of women, children and old men among the victim.



Some said they were fired on by the refugees beneath the bridge. Others said they do not remember hostile fire. One said they later found a few disguised North Korean soldiers among the dead. But others disputed the claims.

Some soldiers refused to shoot what one described as "civilians just trying to hide."

The 30 Korean claimants said what happened on July 26-29, 1950, was an unprovoked, three-day carnage.

"The American soldiers... with our lives like boys... year-old girl at the time... The reported death toll... make No Gun Ri one of... known cases of large-scale... of noncombatants by U.S... troops in this century's... military law experts note... The other was Vietnam... Lai massacre, in 1968, in... more than 500 Vietnamese... have died.

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