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How VC Executed 2 U.S. POWs^{SS}

SAIGON (AP)—Two American prisoners were dragged from village to village, put on display, then executed by the Viet Cong in front of a hamlet church north of Hue, U.S. military spokesmen said Saturday.

The U.S. Command said the bodies of Capt. David R. Devers, of Mount Holly, N.C., and M. Sgt.

John H. O'Neill of Providence, R.I., were found last Christmas Eve in a shallow grave by U.S. Marines. Both had been listed as missing in action.

The U.S. Command said it withheld announcement of the discovery of their bodies pending an investigation, positive identification of the bodies through dental records and notification of next of kin three days ago.

"Reports from residents in the area stated the Viet Cong put the U.S. prisoners on display in several villages before executing them," said a statement from the U.S. Command.

"They had been captured after an action Aug. 13, 1966, and later shot to death by their Viet Cong captors."

The spokesman said the two were not the first prisoners executed by the Viet Cong. He said there had been reports of others, but he did not know how many.

In Mount Holly, N.C., Mrs. Terry Cannon, Devers' former wife

said she had been notified by telegram and by an Army officer that Devers had been "executed on the legal date of Sept. 30, 1966," 49 days after his capture.

The U.S. Command said it was presumed that O'Neill was executed at the same time.

Mrs. Cannon said she was told that Devers "was taken with another American (presumably O'Neill) in front of the church in the village and executed."

"The villagers did not report the execution until Christmas Eve of 1966," she said. "The Army said the villagers were afraid of being shot themselves."

The bodies were found by a U.S. Marine civic action team, acting on information supplied by residents of the area. It was by residents of the area.

A spokesman for the U.S. Command said the grave was located in a coastal area of Thua Thien Province, in the northernmost 1st Corps area of South Vietnam. The bodies of three South Vietnamese soldiers, apparently executed, also were found in the shallow grave.

Devers and O'Neill were members of a U.S. advisory team attached to the South Vietnamese 1st Infantry Division.