

Pins Blame on Soviet In Polish Massacre

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typewriter. The bodies themselves were covered with only about five feet of sandy soil and were stacked like sardines, face down, to a depth of about 12 feet."

The exhumations were being hurried "because the heat was getting worse," he went on. The Germans insisted that he and Stewart pick out a body and examine it.

"The only thing recognizable was that it was a male human," Van Vliet testified. "There was a bullet hole in the back of the head and a larger exit hole in the forehead. The face was caved in. The clothing and the contents of the pockets were removed and it was plainly evident the body had not been tampered with."

High-grade Footwear.

The witness said that one thing he noted, which the Germans had not pointed out, was that the boots and breeches "were of high quality and in many cases made to order. Also they were not very much worn."

Van Vliet said he wanted to believe the Soviet story that the Germans were to blame, because at the time he was sore at the Germans for being the enemy and his jailers. But he said if the Germans were to blame, it meant that they couldn't have done it before 1943, when they got into the Smolensk area. However, none of the diaries and clippings found on the Polish officers were dated later than May, 1940, he added.

He said the condition of the boots and breeches convinced him that the officers were murdered before they had a chance to wear them very much, and that it must have occurred after the Russians had overrun part of Poland in the Summer of 1940.

Pledged to Secrecy.

Van Vliet said he reported his findings to Maj. Gen. Clayton Bissell, Assistant Chief of Staff for Army Intelligence, in Washington, in May, 1945, and then dictated his story to a stenographer. However, he said, apparently, no copies were made of the report, though it was marked "top secret." He added that at his own suggestion Bissell formally ordered him not to discuss the matter with anyone. Van Vliet explained that he had been afraid he would be pestered with inquiries about the controversial massacre.

Chairman Ray J. Madden (D-

Ind.) asked: "In your original report, were you as emphatic as to the guilt of the Russians as you are today?"

"I was, sir," the witness answered. He said it was the last he heard of the matter until the Army asked him to do it all over again in 1950.



(United Press Telefoto)

Testifying before a special House committee investigating the Katyn Forest massacre, Col. John H. Van Vliet points to spot on map where massacre took place.

Pins Blame on Reds In Polish Massacre

By PAUL HEALY
of THE NEWS Bureau

Washington, D. C., Feb. 4.—An American Army officer today told the grisly story of how he became convinced that the Russians were guilty of the massacre of 10,000 Polish army officers in Katyn Forest in World War II.

The witness before a special House committee probing the controversial Katyn shooting was Col. John H. Van Vliet, now stationed in Tokyo, who was a prisoner of war in Germany from 1943 to 1945. Van Vliet testified that he saw the Polish bodies exhumed in 1943 and made a report on it to Army Intelligence in 1945, in which he blamed the Russians.

Report Got "Lost."

He said the Pentagon promised him it would forward his "top secret" report to the State Department but that the matter became dormant, the Army later pleading that it had lost the file and the State Department claiming it never received it. The U. S. Government had supported the Soviets' contention that the atrocity was a Nazi operation.

Van Vliet was a prisoner by