During the Vietnam War, a company of American soldiers killed the majority of the population of the South Vietnamese hamlet of My Lai in March 1968.

The Massacre took place due to poor command and control and lack of clear orders. Also, to get revenge because they were tired of losing their men.

The Charlie Company and the 11th Brigade knew that the massacre would cause a scandal. Therefore, they made efforts to cover up the bloodshed.

This massacre was revealed by a soldier in the 11th Brigade named Ron Ridenhour. Since the government did not take this into notice, he interviewed a journalist and confessed the massacre.

American citizens lost trust in the government because the military was trying to cover up the massacre. The brutality of the My Lai and the cover-up increased growing anti war opinions of the home front in the U.S. and divided the nation over the continuing American presence in Vietnam.
Soldiers that were involved in the massacre saw Lieutenant William Calley as a dedicated soldier who had only been carrying out orders. The massacre was so brutal the returning American soldiers suffered from PTSD.

This massacre gave the public more questioning why the United States was involved in the Vietnam War. On the other hand, the military observers concluded that the military needed better volunteers and provide stronger leaderships for the troops.

500 people including women, children and the elderly were killed in the My Lai Massacre. Some included fifty age 3 or younger, 69 between 4 and 7, and 27 in their 70s or 80s. Vietnamese women were raped and other civilians were clubbed and stabbed. Some victims were mutilated with the signature “C Company” carved into the chest.

One of the soldiers who was later testified confessed “I cut their throats, cut off their hands, cut out their tongues, scalped them. I did it. A lot of people were doing it and I just followed. I lost all sense of direction.” This shows how the American soldiers were pressured into attacking the innocent civilians.

My Lai Massacre became the symbol of the Vietnamese War. Some people looked at the massacre as pure cruelty and other viewed it as deeper problems such as leadership, training, and morale.


http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My_Lai_Massacre