No Gun Ri
by Tom Kennedy*

The infamous site where 400 South Koreans were massacred by US troops in
The 1950 American war in Korea.

I was one of a five-member ‘Veterans For Peace’ delegation sent to South Korea
in support of an effort to prevent the
Eviction of farmers from their land taken from them for
A U.S. base expansion....

We stand in a circle looking down - at the bullet ridden wall - the entrance to the train tunnel
That goes through the village of No Gun Ri - Our hosts include a retired South Korean General.
He wants us to know about this place–what happened?
A small altar of flowers and pictures shows some of the children and mothers who died
Here 60 years ago.

Among our small group of about ten is a humble woman - who cries silently to herself.
She was a nine year old girl - who watched in horror - as all those around her went down
In a hail of bullets from machine guns and planes that strafed the entrance and into
The railroad tunnel - earlier soldiers had told them to go there for safety.
She speaks to us softly and pleadingly so we might understand the impossible.
Her parents and siblings are dying - amid the noise and screaming and impacts of missiles of death.
She gets up and looks at her dead family, but her left eye has fallen out of her head - holding it in her hand.

Sixty years later - I go - hold her in my arms - this nine year old girl - as if to apologize - on our behalf

The 'Veterans for Peace.'

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