

Guerrillas Get Life For Murder Of U.S. Soldiers

STUTTGART, West Germany (AP) — Urban guerrilla Andreas Baader and two companions were sentenced to life imprisonment Thursday for the terror-bomb murders of four U.S. soldiers during the Vietnam war.

Baader, 33, his girl friend Gudrun Ensslin, 36, and Jan-Carl Raspe, 32, were found guilty of bombing Army posts in Frankfurt and Heidelberg in 1972 and buildings in four other German cities.

"Not everyone can declare himself a subject of international law and declare war on his own," chief Judge Eberhard Foth declared in rejecting defense claims that the bombings were legitimate protests against U.S. military actions in Vietnam.

The three terrorists were also convicted by the five-judge tribunal of 34 counts of attempted murder and of forming a criminal conspiracy. They are on a hunger strike in their jail cells and refused to come to court to hear the verdict.

The 23-month trial in a special security courthouse built for the case at Stuttgart's Stammheim Prison was punctuated by the same outbreaks of antistate violence that made the Baader-Meinhof gang West Germany's "Public Enemy No. 1" from 1970 to 1972.

Three weeks ago, chief federal prosecutor Siegfried Buback, 57, who led the state's case against the terrorists, was assassinated in Karlsruhe by a group calling itself "Commando Ulrike Meinhof."

Mrs. Meinhof, 41, the gang's accused cochief along with Baader, was found hanged in her jail cell last May, and West Germany authorities said she committed suicide in a fit of depression.

Her sympathizers, however, claimed she was murdered. She

and the others were arrested in June 1972 after a vast manhunt.

Baader, Miss Ensslin and Raspe were found guilty of murdering Lt. Col. Paul A. Bloomquist, 39, of Salt Lake City, Utah, in a three-bomb attack on V Corps headquarters in Frankfurt on May 11, 1972.

The three other American soldiers were killed May 24, 1972, when the gang set off three bombs hidden in civilian cars at the Army's European headquarters in Heidelberg, wrecking a computer center.

The victims were Capt. Clyde R. Bonner, 29, of El Paso, Tex.; Spec. 5 Ronald A. Woodward, 26, of Otterlake, Mich., and Spec. 5 Charles L. Peck, 23, of Hawthorne, Calif., the Army said.

Accepting responsibility for the blasts, the gang said the Frankfurt facility was the center of CIA operations in West Germany and the Heidelberg center was used to plan American bombing in Vietnam.

Before boycotting the trial, the defendants often interrupted by shouting obscenities and were ejected from court several times. Protest motions by the leftist defense lawyers caused delays, and the trial almost collapsed Jan. 20 when Judge Theodor Prinzing was ousted as tribunal chairman on a motion accusing him of prejudice. Foth replaced him.

The lawyers selected by the defendants openly sympathized with their clients, and several are facing prosecution for allegedly smuggling messages to gang sympathizers outside the prison.

German authorities have admitted bugging their jail cells twice because of fears the lawyers and terrorists were plotting to force their release. The eavesdropping operations and the disqualification of Prinzing are expected to form the basis for appeals.