came from a 30-06 rifle of

F Pars

Did Ray's rifle shoot fatal bullet?

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT By Michael Dorman

yesterday, attempting to determine whether the rifle presumed to have bullets into a 900-gallon water tank Ir. actually fired the murder bullet. silled the Rev. Martin Luther King Ballistics experts began firing test

crime lab in South King-University of Rhode Island The tests were conducted at the

and bore his fingerprint. were seen publicly when murder scene, with other was discovered near the admittedly owned by Ray for the tests. The weapon, a delivered to the crime lab years the rifle and bullet at the request of James stown under a Tennessee tems traceable to Ray. 30-06 hunting rifle, was first time in nearly 20 court order issued last week Earl Ray's lawyers. For the Previous ballistics tests

James Earl Ray



Wartin Luther King

Antimo pagoio eminara

sassination site, investigaof Ray's gun near the as-

tors concluded it was the

findings and the discovery weapon. Because of those the same type as Ray's showed that the fatal bullet

murder weapon. But the

prosecutor John Campbell said. that impossible to prove, Memphis mangled condition of the bullet made

since the 1968 assassination make contends that scientific advances Ray's gun did not fire the fatal bullet tests that might demonstrate that possible more sophisticated ballistics Defense lawyer William Pepper providing grounds for a

full-scale trial.

on hospital. disease in a Nashville prisas near death with a liver acy. He has been described been a patsy in a conspirclaims he did not fire the year term. Ray, 69, now death sentence and receivthus evading a possible cause he pleaded guilty in 1969 to killing King stringent courtroom test behas never been put to fatal shot but may have ing a plea-bargained 99 The evidence against Ray

cut state police laboratory. Hathaway and Marshal Suffolk County police labo-ratory, University of Rhode are George Reich from the perts conducting the tests Robinson of the Connecti-Island criminologist Robert The three ballistics ex-



Firearms expert George Reich shrots round from rifle allegedly used to assassinate King.

where a scanning electron microscope will compare the bullets. sent to a private lab, CamScan USA der microscopes at the Rhode Island lab. The bullets and rifle then will be day. The bullets will be examined un-They plan to fire the Ray rifle into the water tank 18 times by late Fri-Inc., in Cranberry Township, Pa.

plugs, Hathaway fired a practice round from a weapon similar to Ray's into the Donning protective goggles and ear-

> cotton and other materials can." damage the outer edge of the bullet like 5-foot-high aluminum tank yesterday "Water is the best medium for recover-ing test bullets," he said. "It doesn't

casings when fired to create markings as distinct as fingerprints, Hathaway markings that are transferred to bullet Each gun barrel has one-of-a-kind

explained.
"This case is going to be quite excit"This case is going to be quite excit"In the case is going to be different to the case is going to be different to the case in the case in the case is going to be different to the case in the case in the case is going to be different to the case in the case in the case is going to be different to the case in the case in the case is going to be different to the case in the case in the case is going to be different to the case in the case in the case is going to be different to the case in the case in the case is going to be different to the case in the case in the case is going to be different to the case in the case in