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CALLEY TRIAL TOLD OF DEATH IN WELL

Witnesses Assert Farmer
Was Tossen In and Shot

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8—An old Vietnamese farmer with a hoe was beaten, tossed in a well and then shot, witnesses testified today at the murder trial of First Lieut. William L. Calley Jr.

One witness said he saw Lieutenant Calley pummel the farmer with his fists. Another witness said he saw the officer aim a rifle down the well after the farmer had been thrown in.

A third witness said he looked down and saw the farmer lying face down in the water. Then he said he heard Lieutenant Calley report by radio to Capt. Ernest L. Medina "that he had shot a V.C. [Vietcong] suspect trying to escape."

The incident occurred about one month before the alleged massacre on March 16, 1968, of South Vietnamese civilians at Mylai where Lieutenant Calley is charged with murder of at least 102 noncombatants.

Not Among Charges

The well incident was not included in four charges of premeditated murder. Col. Reid W. Kennedy, the military judge, allowed the testimony only as evidence that Lieutenant Calley was mentally capable of planning murder. The defense has asserted that the lieutenant was suffering "partial mental impairment" brought on by fear and stress when he fired into unarmed men, women and children herded into a ditch at Mylai.

Judge Kennedy cautioned the jury of six officers not to infer from today's testimony that Lieutenant Calley was "a vicious person with criminal propensities."

Among those who testified to the episode of the well was a former witness for the defense, Louis B. Martin, now a policeman Modesto, Calif.

Mr. Martin, who was serving as radio operator for a forward artillery observer, said he first noticed Lieutenant Calley "strike the suspect several times with a closed fist."

Face Under Water

"Next I observed the man straddling the well, and eventually he was inside the well," he said. "I don't know who pushed him in. I recall hearing shots. I walked past the well. I saw the top of his head. His face was under water."

"Lieutenant Calley established a radio contact with Captain Medina. He called Medina and said he shot a suspect trying to escape."

James R. Bergeholdt of Niagara Falls, N. Y., the soldier who "captured" the farmer, testified:

"He [the farmer] was in a rice paddy, a hoe in his hands. I brought the man in to Lieutenant Calley for interrogation and started to walk away."

"I heard someone say, 'See if he can swim.' I heard a splash and turned around."

"Calley was looking down the well with his rifle, and there was a shot."

"Someone said, 'He blew his brains out!' I went over and looked down and saw a lot of blood."

Saw Farmer Dead

A third witness, Billy Carney of Meridian, Miss., testified that he had seen Lieutenant Calley standing beside the well trying to interrogate the farmer and warning that "if the farmer didn't talk he'd be thrown in the well."

Mr. Carney said he walked away, heard a shot, returned to the well and saw the farmer lying dead at the bottom.

The Government will conclude its rebuttal testimony tomorrow. Then several witnesses whose testimony has been requested by one or more of the jurors will be called as court witnesses. These will include Captain Medina, who faces a court-martial on murder charges in the Mylai affair, Col. Oran K. Henderson, former commander of the 11th Brigade, who is accused of covering up the incident, and S. Sgt. David Mitchell, who was acquitted last Nov. 20 of assault with intent to kill at least 30 Vietnamese at Mylai.