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Ex-Aide in Pentagon Lends His Support To Col. Henderson

FORT MEADE, Md., May 25 (AP)—The Army colonel who made the first Pentagon investigation of the killings at My Lai 4 today questioned Col. Oran K. Henderson's ability to probe thoroughly the incident and carry out his normal duties as a combat brigade commander.

Col. William V. Wilson, a member of the Inspector General's staff, said he believed that Colonel Henderson would have had to allow his other duties in Vietnam to slip in order to concentrate on a thorough inquiry into the March, 1968 incident.

Colonel Wilson was a prosecution witness at a hearing related to Colonel Henderson's pending court-martial on charges that he participated in an alleged cover-up of information about the killings.

"If I put myself in Colonel Henderson's position at the time as a brigade commander responsible for 2,000 or 3000 troops over hundreds of square miles and in continuous combat operations," Colonel Wilson testified, "I question the ability of Colonel Henderson—unless he wants to disregard his troops—to make as thorough investigation as I did."

Colonel Wilson said that when he had finished his investigation, he did not consider Colonel Henderson a suspect and he believed the infantry officer had probably checked out reports of the killings of civilians with the information he said he had immediately after the incident.

At the time of the My Lai operation the 50-year-old Colonel Henderson commanded the Americal Division's 11th Brigade, parent unit of the infantry platoon led by First Lieut. William L. Calley Jr., convicted of murdering at least 22 civilians at the South Vietnamese hamlet.

Colonel Henderson is accused of failing to conduct a "proper and thorough investigation" of atrocity reports and of subsequently lying to a Pentagon inquiry headed by Lieut. Gen. William R. Peers.

Henry Rothblatt, Colonel Henderson's civilian lawyer, said, "Wilson will turn out to be our best witness. After 3½ months of investigation, he could find nothing wrong."