

Copter Leader Says He Can't Remember Ever Talking

By DOUGLAS ROBINSON

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FORT MEADE, Md., Sept. 21 —The former commander of an assault helicopter unit in Vietnam testified today that he could not recall ever talking with Col. Oran K. Henderson about what his pilots had seen at the hamlet of Mylai 4.

The witness, Lieut. Col. Glen D. Gibson said that to the best of his recollection, the colonel had not asked him to make a "survey" of his flyers to de-

termine whether they had seen any unnecessary killing during the infantry attack on the village.

The testimony by Colonel Gibson, a prosecution witness, was the first at Colonel Henderson's court-martial to deal with one of the three charges against him, that of lying in two appearances before an Army board inquiring into the incident.

In addition to the perjury charge, Colonel Henderson is accused of dereliction of duty

in not conducting an adequate investigation of the killings and of failing to report a war crime to his superiors. The mass killings of more than 100 civilians took place on March 16, 1968.

When he appeared on two occasions before the Army board headed by Lieut. Gen. William R. Peers almost two years ago, Colonel Henderson said that he had personally instructed Colonel Gibson, a major at the time of Mylai, to

question his men about the killings.

After saying that he could not recall any such instruction, Colonel Gibson told the court that he had seen Colonel Henderson at the Pentagon during the Peers investigation.

"After I had presented myself, he said, 'You're the aviation company commander,'" Colonel Gibson related. "Then, as I agreed, he added something that sounded like, 'With whom I talked.'"

Colonel Gibson's testimony

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to Henderson About What Pilots Saw at Mylai

was heard despite objections by the defense attorney that the Peers report had not yet been entered into evidence. The prosecution said that the report would be entered later in the trial when General Peers took the stand.

The judge allowed the testimony but would not permit Colonel Gibson to read aloud from the document.

In the afternoon, the court heard Col. William V. Wilson, who conducted the initial Mylai investigation when com-

plaints were heard more than a year after the assault.

Colonel Wilson read from a letter written by Colonel Henderson to his division commander more than a month after the slayings. The letter said

that 20 civilians had been killed at Mylai by artillery fire and in the "cross fires between the United States troops and enemy force."

The Henderson letter also contended that the charges of

a massacre by American troops was a "Vietcong propaganda move" and recommended that a counter-propaganda effort be initiated.

The trial before the jury will resume next Monday.