
Troops Told to Fire, Youth Says

A Kent State University graduate who said he witnessed the killing of four students there declared here yesterday he heard a National Guard officer give the order to open fire.

"Don't let anybody tell you those National Guardsmen fired those shots on their own," said Bob Covington, the former president of the Black Students Union at the Ohio college.

Covington, now a San Francisco resident who was at Kent State on a visit, declared: "I heard the officer give the order to fire. He said, 'Fire,' and then I saw him draw his .45 and shot at the kids themselves.

"There was a girl standing near me. I saw her school books fly out of her hands as she fell backwards, and a great amount of blood spurted from her head. She was

one of the girls who was killed.

Covington said only "a few" of the National Guardsmen fired at the students and that most of them shot into the air.

The young man, who addressed nearly 600 Hastings Guardsmen were about the same age as the students they killed. But he said he felt the Guardsmen acted as if they were "something other" because of their weapons.

"You could see the hostility in their eyes," he said.

Another speaker, Supervisor Terry Francois, urged the students to work in the political arena to change Congress nearer to their desires.

"There is no more effective way to change a politician than to vote him out of office," he said.
