

# COURT CONVICTS ANTIWAR OFFICER

U.S. Air Force Panel Finds  
Captain Guilty in Britain  
—Defense Plans Appeal

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LAKENHEATH, England, July 13—A United States Air Force court-martial found Capt. Thomas S. Culver guilty today of having taken part in an antiwar demonstration in London on May 31 in violation of military regulations.

The eight-man panel also convicted him of charges of having incited other servicemen to join in demonstrating.

Captain Culver, the first American officer accused of participating in an antiwar demonstration in Britain, stood impassively before the court as the verdict was announced. He saluted the court president, Col. Eugene Traendly, of Woodside, Queens, and walked stiffly to his seat. Several young American women in the courtroom burst into tears.

"My God, it'll take a hunk out of my life," Captain Culver said moments later. "But I'm not sorry for what I did. I did something right. I'm proud of it."

The court is to take up Captain Culver's sentence tomorrow after the appearance of character witnesses. Captain Culver, a 32-year-old legal officer from Westfield N. J., faces a maximum sentence of four years' imprisonment, dishonorable dis-

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## Antiwar Captain Is Convicted By Air Force Court in England

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charge and total forfeiture of pay.

The stocky Air Force officer said he would appeal the verdict to the military and Federal court systems. The case will be reviewed at Third Air Force Headquarters at South Ruislip Air Force Base in England, with further appeals expected to the Air Force court of Military Review in Washington and the military's highest court, the three-man Court of Military Appeal.

Should those appeals fail, Captain Culver said, the case would be taken to the Federal courts and may reach the Supreme Court. Edward Sherman, a University of Indiana law professor, is expected to defend Captain Culver. Mr. Sherman, a specialist in military justice, was one of Captain Culver's lawyers at the court-martial, at the request of the American Civil Liberties Union.

### Petitions to U.S. Embassy

Captain Culver was accused of violating a military regulation that states: "Members of the Air Force are prohibited from participating in demonstrations in a foreign country." The Air Force also charged that Captain Culver had "solicited other military personnel" to take part in the London protest, in which 300 servicemen walked from Hyde Park's Speaker's Corner to the American Embassy to hand in antiwar petitions. The servicemen then boarded buses for an antiwar rock concert and show at Victoria Park.

Today's verdict followed a

plea by Capt. Frank S. Wesson, a 32-year-old career officer and one of Captain Culver's lawyers who said in summing up the defense case:

"Our servicemen are a lot different today than 25 years ago. They're better educated, more aware of what's going on. They came to London in a relaxed casual manner, in a peaceful way, to present petitions, as they're allowed. It was an exercise of First Amendment rights. It was the right to petition for a redress of grievances."

### Summation by Defense

Speaking slowly, with a soft Tennessee drawl, Captain Wesson asked the jury: "Is there a reasonable doubt about this case? How will you feel about this tomorrow night, next week when you're on the golf course, on leave? What about the next court-martial? Are you going to think about Captain Culver?"

Captain Wesson concluded by quoting President Nixon, who said at graduation ceremonies at the Air Force Academy on June 4, 1969: "I believe that every man now in uniform is a citizen first and a serviceman second, and that we must resist any attempt to isolate or separate the defenders from the defended."

The prosecutor, Capt. Franklin A. Luna, of Clemson, S. C., argued that the defendant "solicited Air Force personnel" outside Lakenheath Air Force Base on May 24, distributing circulars that advertised the May 31 protest in London.

"Such solicitation was conduct unbecoming an officer," Captain Luna, who is from the 16th Air Force Headquarters



Associated Press

**AFTER VERDICT:** Air Force Capt. Thomas Culver at court at Lakenheath, England, yesterday.

in Torrejon, Spain, told the court. "He planned to go to that demonstration, he went, he donned an armband, he identified himself with the group. What happened at Hyde Park, at the American Embassy, at Victoria Park, constituted a demonstration in any sense of the word."