

# Calley Concedes Killings; Says He Acted on Orders

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FORT BENNING, Ga., Feb. 23—First Lieutenant William L. Calley Jr. admitted from the witness stand today that he shot some civilian prisoners who had been herded into a

ditch in the South Vietnamese hamlet of Mylai 4 three years ago, but he said he was acting under orders.

The lieutenant, who said he had no regrets, testified he told one soldier to kill a group of civilians because "that was my order, sir—that was the order of the day, sir."

"They were all enemy," he contended. "They were all to be destroyed."

The 27-year-old officer, on trial for the murder of at least 102 South Vietnamese men,

*Excerpts from the testimony will be found on Page 20.*

women and children, said he had been acting under repeated orders from his company commander, Capt. Ernest L. Medina.

While admitting that he participated in the mass slaying at the ditch, Lieutenant Calley denied that he joined in another group slaying of men, women and children along a trail.

He is facing a court-martial on four counts of premeditated murder—two counts involving

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the mass killings and two counts of individual slayings, one involving a child who allegedly attempted to escape from the ditch and the other involving an old man in white robes who might have been a Buddhist monk.

Lieutenant Calley conceded that he had shot the child. He saw a head bobbing in a rice paddy, he said, and he fired and it turned out to be "just a boy" who was a fugitive from the ditch. But he did not, as Government witnesses testified, throw the boy back into the ditch before shooting him, the lieutenant said.

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Associated Press

**DURING BREAK IN TESTIMONY: Lieut. William L. Calley Jr. walking yesterday with an attorney, Richard Kay, during recess for lunch of trial at Fort Benning, Ga.**

He denied killing the white-robed old man. All he did, he testified, was to butt-stroke him. He hit the victim on the head with the butt of his rifle after an "interrogation," he explained.

The old man collapsed at the edge of the ditch, still alive, Lieutenant Calley testified. "Somebody's foot" propelled him into the ditch along with the others, Lieutenant Calley said.

Lieutenant Calley said he could not have killed as many as 102 persons. He said he could not recall changing his rifle's magazine during the action and that he still had left some rounds of his original magazine, which had contained 18 rounds.

Government witnesses have said they saw Lieutenant Calley change magazines as he fired into the ditch.

#### Would Clear Minefields

Lieutenant Calley said he had wanted to spare some of the inhabitants of Mylai, but only to have them walk across enemy minefields that he had been told to expect on the eastern side of Mylai.

George W. Latimer, the chief defense counsel, asked if the use of Vietnamese to clear minefields was a standard practice.

"It was understood," Lieutenant Calley replied, "we'd have civilians in front of us to clear the minefields."

Under cross-examination by Capt. Aubrey M. Daniel 3d, Lieutenant Calley said that as his men entered the village he told one of his sergeants "to hang onto some of the Vietnamese" for mine sweeping.

He said he had been given these "instructions" by Captain Medina.

But in the end, he testified, he and his troops had to kill all the civilians because they "could not be moved fast enough" and Captain Medina was on the radio bawling him out for slowing up the action.

#### Second Day on Stand

In his second day on the witness stand, Lieutenant Calley remained a very tense witness. The military judge, Col Reid W. Kennedy called the mid-morning recess five minutes earlier than usual to let him regain composure.

At the end of the direct examination, he seemed to gain confidence briefly. His answers were firm as Lieutenant Latimer led him quickly through questions that lay at the heart of the defense strategy.

"No, sir, I didn't," Lieutenant Calley replied to such questions such as "Did you ever form an intent, specifically or generally, to waste [kill] any Vietnamese man, woman or child?" and, "Did you at any time consciously conceive the wasting of any man, woman or child Vietnamese?"

Lieutenant Calley said he wanted only to "waste and destroy the enemy, sir."

The defense has relied heavily on testimony of psychiatrists who swore that Lieutenant Calley, because of his limited educational background and because of the stress of combat in Vietnam, was suffering a

mental impairment and could not have premeditated the killings.

As for the mass slaying of about 30 Vietnamese, mostly women and children, on the trail, Lieutenant Calley said he had never been at that scene.

He had been placed there by at least four witnesses, including Pvt. Paul Meadlo, who testified that Lieutenant Calley ordered him to "take care" of the civilians, then upbraided him later for not "wasting" them, and finally joined Private Meadlo in gunning down the group.

Today Lieutenant Calley conceded that he encountered Private Meadlo with some Vietnamese civilians and told him merely to get the civilians moving out of the village so they could be used later to clear minefields.

Later he again encountered Private Meadlo with the civilians in "basically the same place, standing in a rice paddy," he said.

"What did you say to him?" asked Captain Daniel in cross-examination.

"Told him if he couldn't move the people to waste 'em," Lieutenant Calley replied.

He said he walked away from the scene, convinced that Private Meadlo would obey his orders to kill the group.

The testimony continued:

Q. Did you hear firing from that area? A. Not specifically from Meadlo, that I know of, sir.

Q. You didn't look back? A. No, sir.

Q. Were you curious as to whether he would obey this order? A. No, sir.

Q. You didn't care whether he would obey that order either? A. I felt that he would.

Q. Why did you feel he would obey that order if he hadn't obeyed the previous order to move out? A. I felt Meadlo was a very good troop. I had no reason to doubt that he would.

#### 5 Occasions Cited

Lieutenant Calley testified earlier that Captain Medina told him on five separate occasions that the orders were to kill all inhabitants of Mylai. Captain Medina replayed these orders at two briefings on the eve of the action, once on the morning of the incident, and twice by radio during the sweep through the village, Lieutenant Calley said.

"Did he classify in his briefing as to whether the enemy would include women and children?" Mr. Latimer asked.

"He didn't break it down," Lieutenant Calley replied. "We had been talking about it from the time we got here, that men, women and children were enemy soldiers."

Lieutenant Calley said that during the enemy's Tet offensive of early 1968 the American commanders in Vietnam were demanding reports of victories, reports often bolstered by inflated body counts of enemy dead.

"It was very important we tell the people back home we were killing more of the enemy than they were killing us," Lieutenant Calley said. "You just made a body count off the top of your head. Anything went into the body count: V.C., buffalo, pigs, cows. Something was dead, you put it into your body count, sir."

Besides shooting the boy and shooting at the people in the ditch, Lieutenant Calley told the military court that he had fired at a Vietnamese male running from the village and that he had shot and presumably killed two other Vietnamese males inside a house.

One of these Vietnamese, standing in a fireplace, was dressed in a green uniform and looked as though he had just come down the chimney, Lieutenant Calley said. The other was dressed in black and was going out the window, he said.