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PROMPT REPORTS ON MYLAI 4 CITED

Copter Chief Tells Trial of
Accounts to Top Officers

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FORT BENNING, Ga., March 3—The mass killing of South Vietnamese civilians at the hamlet of Mylai 4 was reported to high-echelon officers of the Americal Division within hours after the incident, a witness said today at the court-martial of First Lieut. William L. Calley Jr.

The witness, Lieut. Col. Frederic W. Watke, who led a company of helicopters in support of the assault on Mylai three years ago, said he had relayed promptly to superior commanders reports from his men of the heavy casualties among non-combatants at Mylai.

He said these reports included a complaint from Chief Warrant Officer Hugh C. Thompson, who testified earlier in this trial that he had seen a ditch containing "a lot of bodies—women, kids, babies, old men—some dead, some alive" and that his offer to evacuate wounded civilians had been rebuffed by Lieutenant Calley.

Testimony on Reports

Colonel Watke, who then held the rank of captain, said he passed the reports on to Lieut. Col. Frank A. Barker, commander of the task force assaulting Mylai, around noon of the day of the attack, March 16, 1968, and notified his own commanding officer, Lieut. Col. John Holladay that evening.

The next morning, at 7 A.M., he said, he reported to Brig. Gen. George H. Young Jr., assistant commander of the Americal Division.

Colonel Watke said that two hours later General Young told him repeat the same information in the presence of Lieut. Col. Oran K. Henderson, Colonel Henderson, commander of the 11th Brigade, was directed to conduct an investigation.

Charges of "covering up" the incident were subsequently made by the Army against Colonel Henderson, General Young, Colonel Watke, Maj. Gen. Samuel W. Koster, commander of the American Division, and 11 others. The charges against Colonel Watke were dropped recently, General Young was cleared last June, and General Koster was cleared on Jan. 29. Colonel Henderson was referred to court-martial last Friday on charges that he "willfully failed to conduct a proper and thorough investigation."

Denial of 'Orders'

Colonel Watke, now assigned to the office of deputy chief of staff for military operations in the Pentagon, firmly denied in his testimony today the defense suggestion that "orders" to kill all Vietnamese found in Mylai came down to Lieutenant Calley through the chain of command.

Lieutenant Calley has admitted shooting at civilians in the ditch at Mylai but contends that he was acting under orders from his company commander, Capt. Ernest L. Medina.

Both Colonel Watke and former Capt. William C. Riggs, who commanded a blocking force at Mylai, testified that they had attended a briefing for company commanders along with Captain Medina and that nothing had been said about killing civilians.

"Was any order given to kill every man, woman and child in the area," asked the Government prosecutor, Capt. Aubrey M. Daniel 3d.

"No sir" said Colonel Watke.

"Was any order given that you were to take no prisoners?"

"No sir."

An intelligence officer accused by the Army of maiming a Vietnamese civilian pleaded Fifth Amendment protection against self-incrimination today when called to testify about the briefings on the eve of the incident. He refused to testify despite a grant of immunity by Maj. Gen. Orwin C. Talbott, the commanding officer of Fort Benning.

Capt. Eugene M. Kotouc, 36 years old, of Humboldt, Neb., who faces court-martial for cutting off part of the finger of a prisoner during an interrogation shortly after the alleged massacre, told the military judge, Col. Reid W. Kennedy, that he would testify only on orders from the judge and "for fear of being prosecuted by the Army for failure to testify."