

Many in U.S. Perturbed By Conviction of Calley

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The reaction yesterday of public officials and private citizens around the country to the conviction of First Lieut. William L. Calley Jr. indicated that many Americans were perturbed and for a variety of reasons.

In Congress, there was a flurry of protests against Lieutenant Calley's conviction on a charge of premeditated murder, accompanied by appeals to President Nixon to consider granting him clemency.

At the Pentagon, there was a pervasive sadness over the damage believed to have been done to the military image, and a feeling among some career officers that the responsibility for Lieutenant Calley's acts should have been laid not on a single lieutenant but on high-ranking officers and officials.

Much of the anger of private citizens seemed similar to that of Mrs. Inge Dunbar, of Louisville, Ky., a Vietnam war widow.

Mrs. Dunbar, who is German-born, was circulating a petition to protest Lieutenant Calley's conviction, saying that many civilians lost their lives in Germany in bombings in World War II, "and nobody paid for it, so why should this man be singled out?"

Congressional indignation was especially marked among Southerners of both parties.

"I've had veterans tell me that if they were in Vietnam now, they would lay down their arms and come home," said Representative John R. Rarick,

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a Louisiana Democrat.

Representative William L. Dickenson, an Alabama Republican, said in the House that he had sent a telegram to the President asking Mr. Nixon to pardon Lieutenant Calley.

A resolution supporting the petition was to be considered today in the Alabama Legislature, and a similar resolution was introduced in the Illinois legislature.

Senator Herman E. Talmadge said in his Senate chambers that he felt many Americans believed Lieutenant Calley was being burdened with the responsibility for the entire war.

"As a former combat veteran myself," the Georgia Democrat said, "I am saddened to think that one could fight for his flag and then be court-martialed and convicted for apparently carrying out his orders."

Misgivings of a different sort were expressed by Senator George S. McGovern, who said that the verdict should not be allowed to distract attention from the broader issue.

"We should not concentrate on war crimes and war trials," said the South Dakota Democrat, who is a declared candidate for the 1972 Democratic Presidential nomination, "but on changing the policies."

The Defense Department reported that within 24 hours, the Pentagon had received 13 telegrams and a few telephone calls, most of them denouncing the verdict.

Among career officers, there was a feeling that the Army had been severely damaged by the entire chain of events from Mylai to the verdict. "We can get more Calleys any time," said one. "They're the ones we don't want."

"What we've lost are the bright ones, the good ones," said another officer.

"Calley has become incidental," said a third officer. "He just happens to be the root

cause. The people who put us in trouble are the people who let this get so far out of shape. The main blame for what happened to the Army should rest on their shoulders."

"Harsh and severe" was the characterization of the verdict by the Army officer who was Lieutenant Calley's immediate superior at the time of the Mylai incident. Capt. Ernest L. Medina.

Captain Medina, who still faces trial on two counts of murder and other charges in connection with Mylai, said in Americans "must share in Calley's guilt."

But many Americans responded to the verdict with apparent indignation at the idea that "one of our boys" could have been guilty of killing unarmed civilians.

"I think it is dangerous and a degradation to the United States ... to take one of our boys, teach him to kill, put him into that kind of war where they tell you everybody's an enemy ... and then prosecute them for doing what they're taught to do," said Mrs. Romona Fisher of St. Albans, Vt. She started a petition campaign calling for Lieutenant Calley's release.

A similar campaign got underway in Goldsboro, N. C. At least four radio stations, one in Wilmington, N. C., two at Reidsville, N. C., and one in Roswell, N. M., said that they were suspending public-service broadcasts for the Army.

The American Legion post at Fort Benning, Ga., where Lieutenant Calley was tried, announced plans to raise \$100,000 for his appeal and a drive for 10 million signatures on a petition protesting his conviction.

In Athens, Ga., all five members of local Draft Board No. 30 resigned, following the lead of George Pugh, the board chairman, who said that he thought all Americans would join him in finding the verdict "unacceptable."