

DECISION BY NIXON ON CALLEY HAILED

Protests Over Conviction Continue Across Nation

By JOHN DARNTON

President Nixon's order releasing First Lieut. William L. Calley Jr. from the stockade pending a review of his case continued to receive widespread public and private support yesterday.

Meanwhile, protests over the lieutenant's conviction and sentencing—in telegrams, petitions, resolutions and demonstrations—mounted across the country.

From Oklahoma City, where a 20-car rush-hour parade carried signs reading "Free Calley!" to Greenwich, Conn., where a homeowner lowered his American flag to half-staff, anger over Monday's verdict was expressed in big ways and small.

In Gainesville, Fla., the family of Lieutenant Calley, who was convicted of the premeditated murder of at least 22 civilians at Mylai and sentenced to life imprisonment, issued a statement that read:

"We were heartsick at the verdict of the court. It is our hope and prayer that the decision of the court can be overruled in some way for Rusty's sake and for the sake of the country."

The statement, in a letter to The Gainesville Sun from Mrs. Marian Keesling, the lieutenant's older sister, thanked "all the people who have given their prayers and support" and expressed appreciation for the President's order. It ended: "But we will continue to be anxious until Rusty has been freed."

V.F.W. Chief Grateful

Herbert R. Rainwater, commander in chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, said: "We are indeed grateful that the President has listened to the heartfelt pleas of our countrymen."

Former Army Capt. Robert F. Marasco, who allegedly fired the fatal shots in the controversial Green Beret slaying of a suspected South Vietnamese double agent two years ago, said he was "incensed" by the verdict. Mr. Marasco, in an interview with John Chancellor of the National Broadcasting Company, said he viewed the verdict as "devastating for the Army and the whole country."

"I looked at it and I said: 'There but for the grace of God go I,'" he remarked, referring to the case in which charges against himself and seven other Green Berets were dropped by the Army.

Ron Haerberle, the former Army photographer whose pictures of the Mylai massacre played a prominent part in the case, found the sentence of life at hard labor "too harsh."

In Waltham, Mass., Ramsey Clark, former United States Attorney General, while refraining from judging "this particular case," said he did not believe Lieutenant Calley deserved Presidential clemency simply because of the "emotion of the moment."

And in New York, Attorney General John N. Mitchell, also declining specific comment, said he was concerned about "the total picture as it relates not only to that lieutenant but to others and the issue of the chain of command."

Spock Scores Verdict

Dr. Benjamin Spock, the anti-war activist, said in Pueblo, Colo., that the conviction was "ultimately hypocritical — it's too bad that one man is being made to pay for the brutality of the whole war."

Meanwhile, expressions of support for the 27-year-old platoon leader from the unofficial and the obscure took a variety of forms. An Omaha patrolman said he had collected 500 signatures on a clemency

petition in one day. About 2,000 persons staged a "sympathy march" through downtown Dallas.

A mother of 13 in Cook Bay, Ore., mailed \$2 to President Nixon as the start of what she hopes will be a \$1-million "Ransom for Calley" fund. And an 18-year-old girl who was suspended from school for attempting to hold a rally obtained a police permit for a parade in downtown San Diego.

Some believed that the punishment was unjust because the lieutenant was "only doing his duty"; others believed that it was too severe and that the lieutenant was a "scapegoat" for higher-ups in the military.

Members of draft boards resigned in protest in Arkansas, Michigan, Florida, Wyoming, Montana, and Kansas.

Resolutions asking for Presidential clemency were passed or being considered by legislatures in South Carolina, Ohio, Michigan, Arkansas and Texas.

A Nashville record company called Shelby Singleton Productions reported that a record called "The Battle Hymn of Lieut. Calley," sung to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," had become an overnight bestseller. A spokesman said 10,000 orders had been received on Tuesday, 40,000 on Wednesday and more than 150,000 yesterday.

The song begins: "My name is William Calley. I'm a soldier of this land. I've tried to do my duty and to gain the upper hand. But they've made me out a villain. They stamped me with a brand . . . as we go marching on."

4-3-71
NYT