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PILOT TELLS TRIAL OF MYLAI REPORT

Says Colonel Interviewed
Him Days After Slayings

By DOUGLAS ROBINSON

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FORT MEADE, Md., Sept. 20

—The helicopter pilot who first reported the slayings of civilians at Mylai 4 to his superiors said today he had been interviewed by a colonel several days after the incident.

The witness, Capt. Hugh C. Thompson Jr., told the court-martial of Col. Oran K. Henderson, however, that he could not remember just who the officer was.

"The individual was taking notes and he was a bird [full] colonel," Captain Thompson said. "I think I told him everything I had seen at Mylai."

Colonel Henderson, the former commander of the 11th Infantry Brigade of the Americal Division, is being tried on charges that he covered up the investigation of the infantry assault on the South Vietnamese hamlet in which more than 100 civilians were shot down on March 16, 1968.

In his testimony, Captain Thompson, a prosecution witness, vividly described the carnage in Mylai. His voice broke at times, once when he told of seeing a baby shot in a ditch and again when he related how one of his gunners had plucked a wounded boy from a pile of dead. They used their aircraft to push the boy to a hospital.

"I remember thinking that I have a young kid about the same age," he told the court.

Gunners Instructed

He also recounted to the jury of two generals and five colonels how he had instructed his gunners to fire on American troops if they fired at the helicopter while he was directing the rescue of a group of terrified civilians from a bunker.

When it came time to describe to whom he had reported the slayings, Captain Thompson's memory failed him. He described the officer as "sort of heavy-set and balding." Colonel Henderson is lean and has brown hair cut medium-short in the militant style.

The captain's testimony today was at variance with that which he gave to the Armed Services Investigating Subcommittee of the House Committee on Armed Services in the spring of 1970.

In his appearance before the subcommittee, Captain Thomp-

son, then a warrant officer, recalled meeting specifically with Colonel Henderson and telling him of seeing a captain shoot a woman, of the civilian bodies in the ditch and of the rescue of the Vietnamese from the bunker.

Before the same subcommittee, Colonel Henderson remembered interviewing Captain Thompson, but the only point the two men agreed on was the incident of the infantry captain's shooting a woman.

Subcommittee Report

A report of the subcommittee says that Colonel Henderson "recalled that Thompson told him the ground troops were like wild men and that a leader

of the ground forces was having his squad fire into houses, trees and bushes which concealed civilians."

The subcommittee's report is not a transcript of the group's hearing. The subcommittee chairman, Representative F. Edward Hebert, Democrat of Louisiana, has declined to release the full transcript. Thus, attorneys have been unable to use the report in the Mylai court-martial.

Captain Thompson becomes the second officer at this trial who has been unable to remember whether he spoke to Colonel Henderson. Last week, Capt. Jerry R. Culverhouse said he had reported the incident to a high-ranking officer, but could

not recall whether the man was Colonel Henderson.

The only witness so far to testify that he reported the slayings to Colonel Henderson has been Lieut. Col. Frederic W. Watke, who was Captain Thompson's commanding officer.

Colonel Watke also said he saw Captain Thompson on his way to see the colonel on March 18, 1968, two days after the Mylai attack.

This morning, the defense, led by Henry B. Rothblatt of New York City, succeeded in temporarily blocking the testimony of former Specialist 4 Lawrence W. Colburn, a gunner on Captain Thompson's aircraft.