

'Henderson My Lai Report

FT. MEADE (Md.) — (AP) — An aviation battalion commander testified today that Col. Oran K. Henderson received a direct order to investigate the killings at My Lai and responded with an untruthful report.

Lt. Col. John Holladay, whose pilots supported the March 16, 1968, infantry assault, said he had seen a report from Henderson but "it did not respond to the allegations."

"What was your reaction to the report?" Holladay was asked at Henderson's court-martial.

"I felt that the report was

in error," said Holladay, now stationed in Los Angeles. "It didn't tell the truth."

100 Deaths

Holladay said he was told what had happened in the village on the evening of the assault by Maj. Frederick Watke, an aviation company commander.

He said Watke used a figure of more than 100 in talking about civilian casualties at their two-hour meeting.

"We were agonizing," Holladay said of hearing the story. "I was appalled at the magnitude of this story Fred was telling me. I remember saying several times "Fred

do you know what you are saying?"

Holladay said he and Watke retold the incident the following day to Brig. Gen. George W. Young, assistant commander of the Americal Division.

'Appalled'

"He was appalled" by this report," Holladay said. "He was extremely concerned. He said he didn't want American soldiers shooting American soldiers. The word 'murder' was uttered by Gen. Young."

Watke had been told of helicopter pilots' observations by WO Hugh Thompson. Thompson had reported a

confrontation he had with an American officer, Lt. William L. Calley Jr., in which Thompson threatened to shoot if soldiers interfered with his evacuation of Vietnamese.

Holladay said he was summoned to a meeting March 18 attended by Young, Watke, Henderson and the late Lt. Col. Frank A. Barker, the commander of the assault forces.

Account Retold

"Gen. Young opened the meeting by saying no one knows about this except the five people in this room," Holladay said. Watke retold the story again, but Hol-

'Was False'

laday said he could not remember if a number of casualties was stated.

"After Fred was finished Gen. Young said to Col. Henderson 'I want you to investigate this and have it sent to me' and he set a time that was an extremely short period of time. It startled me."

Holladay said he recalled that Henderson was given in the neighborhood of two or three days to prepare the report.

Did Not Respond

Holladay today was shown a 1½ page report Henderson sent to the Americal Division commander on April 24, 1968, but he said he could not be

sure if that was the Henderson report he then saw.

What he had seen at division headquarters, Holladay said, was "a report by Col. Henderson in which the allegations made by Maj. Watke were not answered." That report, Holladay said, talked of 20 civilians killed by artillery and gunship fire and "did not respond to the allegations."

Holladay's testimony came at the start of the seventh week of Henderson's trial on charges that he concealed the massacre by failing to investigate it properly and reporting it to higher command and of lying twice to a high-level Army investigation.