

Witness Cites Report

The Deaths at My Lai

Ft. Meade, Md.

The defense called witnesses yesterday to show that the commander of the My Lai task force conducted an investigation for Colonel Oran K. Henderson, who is accused of trying to cover up civilian slayings there in 1968.

Major William R. Daknis testified that while he was a staff officer in Henderson's 11th infantry brigade he saw a report on civilian deaths on the desk of the late Colonel Frank Barker, commander of task force Barker which conducted the My Lai attack.

FLIGHT

A former helicopter pilot, Jeffrey C. Howard, told the jury of two generals and five colonels that he flew Barker on secret missions to talk

with ground troops about a month after the My Lai assault.

He said he did not know the purpose of the approximately 15 flights, but his testimony, presented over prosecution objections, was presented in an effort to show Henderson innocent of charges he was derelict in his duty to investigate and report on indiscriminate killing of civilians.

CHAPLAINS

One of the key issues in the court-martial, which began August 23, is the whereabouts of the report Barker is said to have submitted to superiors sometime between March 16, 1968, the day of the attack, and his death in a helicopter crash about three months later.

The defense also presented two chaplains who attested to Henderson's good character and reputation.

The defense presented a total of nine witnesses yesterday, and the court-martial then was recessed until tomorrow to allow both sides to interview additional witnesses who have just arrived.

The next session after that will be Monday, when Henderson himself is scheduled to take the stand along with other defense witnesses.

Judge Peter S. Wondolowski said he anticipated that the case would go to the jury around the first week in December or by December 10 at the latest, following closing arguments and his instructions to the jury.

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