

Army Closes The My Lai Investigation

SF Examiner

WASHINGTON — (UPI) — Ending the final investigation of the My Lai massacre, Army Secretary Robert F. Froehlke ordered a veteran sergeant discharged and two officers reprimanded for unprofessional conduct during the 1968 incident, the Army announced yesterday.

Froehlke's non-judicial "administrative action" against S. Sgt. Kenneth L. Hodges, Col. Nels A. Parson and Capt. Dennis H. Johnson of Oakland raised to 13 the number of soldiers punished in some form as a result of My Lai. Another 12 men originally charged were cleared.

Calley Case

"No other administrative actions . . . are contemplated," an Army spokesman said. "Basically, this wraps up the My Lai case."

Two court actions, however, must be completed before the books are completely closed on the slaughter of civilian Vietnamese men, women and children at My Lai March 16, 1968, by a platoon of the Americal Division's 11th Infantry Brigade.

One is the continuing re-

view of Lt. William L. Calley's court martial conviction for the murder of at least 22 civilians. Calley's life sentence was reduced to 20 years at hard labor, and is now before the U.S. Court of Military Review.

Professional Standards

The other is a suit filed in a U.S. District Court in Georgia by Hodges, who was informed of Froehlke's action against him in June. Hodges is seeking to block his discharge and on June 7 obtained a temporary restraining order against the Army.

The Army's announcement yesterday gave no reasons for Froehlke's actions. A spokesman said, "We're not discussing specifics, oth-

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er than that they did not meet the professional standards of people with their grade and experience."

Froehlke ordered Hodges, 27, of Dublin, Ga., discharged "for the convenience of the government" and barred his future re-enlistment. Hodges, a nine-year Army veteran, had been a squad leader in Calley's platoon.

The Army secretary ordered Parson, 51, of Toledo, Ohio, stripped of his Legion of Merit award and placed a letter of censure in his file. Parson had been Americal Division chief of staff.

He ordered a letter of reprimand placed in the file of Johnson, 36, who was an intelligence officer with the 11th Brigade at the time of My Lai.

Among 25 Investigated

Parson is now assigned to the Combat Development Command at Ft. Belvoir, Va.; Johnson to the 9th Infantry Division at Ft. Lewis, Wash.; and Hodges to the Army Infantry Center at Ft. Benning, Ga.

All three men had been among 25 who were criminally charged after the initial My Lai investigation because of the massacre and its subsequent coverup.

Hodges was charged with rape and assault with intent to commit murder, and the other two with either failure to obey regulations or dereliction of duty.

Army officials later dropped criminal charges against Parson, Johnson, Hodges and 16 others for lack of evidence. Of the remaining six who were court-martialed, only Calley was convicted.

The Army, however, conducted another investigation of 23 of those cleared either through military courts or for lack of evidence "to determine if each individual did, in fact, meet professional standards expected of a person of his grade and experience."

General Lost a Star
The only one of the origin-

al 25 not thus investigated, except for Calley, was Col. Oran K. Henderson, who was cleared by a military court of any wrongdoing in connection with the coverup of My Lai.

Investigators cleared 11 officers and enlisted men of any professional failures but found that 13 others including Parson, Johnson and Hodges had failed to live up to standards. The last man cleared was notified yesterday, triggering the Army announcement.

Those punished for unprofessional conduct also included Maj. Gen. Samuel Koster, Americal Division commander during My Lai, who was stripped of one star and his Distinguished Service Medal and given a letter of censure of failure to investigate the incident.

Koster's deputy, Brig. Gen. George Young, lost his distinguished Service Medal and received a letter of censure for the same reason.

The Army also discharged three enlisted men — Sp. 4 Max Hutson, Sgt. Esequiel Torres and Sgt. Kenneth Schiel — "for the convenience of the government" and barred them from future re-enlistment.

Army officials also barred from future re-enlistment former Sgt. Charles Hutto, former Cp. 4 Robert T. Souvas, former Sp. 4 William Doherty and former Pvt. Gerald Smith, all of whom had left the service before the administrative action was taken.