

Army Officers' Accuser

Anthony Bernard Herbert

By JAMES T. WOOTEN

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ATLANTA, March 12—In 1943, when he was a strapping, 13-year-old kid in the Pennsylvania coal fields, Anthony Bernard Herbert ran away from home and enlisted in the Marines. "I guess I should be glad Mom came and took me back," he laughs now. "I always was an Army man, anyway." That, despite his levity, is precisely what he is: a robust lieutenant colonel

Man
in the
News

who was once a private, a steel-nerved hero with a chest full of medals, an Army man from the gleam on his spit-shined shoes to the close-cropped hair on his head.

"That's why what I'm doing will be hard for a lot of people to understand," he said yesterday after preparing formal military charges against a general and a colonel he accuses of covering up war crimes in Vietnam.

"It's only because I am Army that I am doing this," he said. "If I didn't care about it and what it may become, I'd forget the whole damned thing."

But it is not likely to be soon forgotten now, for Lieutenant Colonel Herbert has stated to the press and the Pentagon his belief that Maj. Gen. John Barnes and Col. J. Ross Franklin ignored his reports of atrocities within the area of their command.

His allegations are noteworthy not only because of the high rank of the men he has accused, but also because Colonel Franklin was a member of the commission headed by Lieut. Gen. William R. Peers that investigated an alleged massacre at the hamlet of Mylai 4 and recommended that several officers, including a general, be court-martialed for concealing violations of the Geneva Conventions.

Reports Not Recalled

General Barnes, who returned to this country from Vietnam last August, said in Washington today that he did not recall the reports Lieutenant Colonel Herbert insists he made.

General Barnes, now assigned to the Pentagon, said "Most of the things he is saying are unfounded, but since there is an investigation going on, it would be inappropriate for me to comment."

Colonel Franklin, who is currently the senior adviser to the 21st Division of the South Vietnamese Army, said simply that it would be inappropriate for him to comment on the charges.

They are to be formally preferred by Lieutenant Colonel Herbert at Fort McPherson here on Monday, he said today, after disclosing that his original plan to file them today had been delayed "because of a shortage of typists" in the office of the post's Judge Advocate General.

After talking with reporters at the post's Office of Public Information, the 41-year-old veteran of 22 years in the

Army retired to a neat, brick house where he, his wife, their 11-year-old daughter, a poodle and a Doberman pinscher live in a well-kept Atlanta suburb.

Different Surroundings

With sliding glass doors that lead to a small swimming pool, the home and the neighborhood seem vastly different from Tony Herbert's beginnings and from most of what he has known ever since he quit high school and joined the Army in 1947.

His hometown of Herminie is set deep in rolling hills not far from Pittsburgh. It was once a coal community and his late father, like most of the other men in the town of 5,000, was a miner. Now the mines are closed and the jobs are in new industries that have built nearby plants—but Colonel Herbert still remembers the way it was.

"You know, the most respected people were not those with the most money or anything like that," he said. "They were the people with that certain inner strength that invariably produces a lifetime of honesty and integrity." They were the people, he said, that he always admired. And the people of Herminie admired him, as well.

After he became the most decorated enlisted man in the Korean War (he won three Silverstars, a Bronze Star and four Purple Hearts as a 22-year-old sergeant), they staged a spectacular celebration in his honor called "Tony Herbert Day." The schools were closed and all of the kids piled into town to help celebrate the return of a hero.

He finished high school, reentered the Army, graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with a bachelor's degree in English and received an officer's commission that was to be but the first of several quick promotions.

In early 1969 he became a battalion commander in the 173d Airborne Brigade, one of the Army's most respected combat units in Vietnam.

In 58 days of combat command there, Lieutenant Colonel Herbert won another Silver Star and three more Bronze Stars before he was relieved of his command.

Those who know Lieuten-



Associated Press

An admirer of "that certain inner strength."

ant Colonel Herbert well call him one of those rare combinations of physical courage, moral integrity and intellectual depth, who frequently find themselves in conflict with their contemporaries.

Others dismiss him as a petulant man, denied what he wants, and determined to have his vengeance.

And there is still a third view of him—that held by those who remember him as the teen-age son of a coal miner who began every day by running five miles through the streets of Herminie.

Jim Strennen, an old friend who now works at the Post Office there, recalls:

"Every morning, every morning—he said he wanted to get in the best physical condition possible. If you got up early enough, you'd see him loping along, in the rain or the snow or hot or cold or whatever, that chin stuck out and those long legs pumping like pistons."