

'They were enemy, not people,' Calley says of My Lai

FT. BENNING, Ga. (AP)—Lt. William L. Calley Jr. admitted Tuesday that he fired at a handful of Vietnamese civilians in My Lai nearly three years ago, and decreed the mass execution of others. But he said he felt he did no wrong.

"I never sat down and analyzed whether they were men, women and children—they were enemy, not people," Calley told the court-martial jury of six superior of-

ficers trying him on charges of premeditated murder of 102 My Lai villagers on March 16, 1968.

"It was a group of people who were the enemy, sir," Calley testified at another point. "I was ordered to go in there and destroy the enemy. That was my job that day. That was my mission . . .

"I felt then and I still do that I acted as I was directed and that I carried out orders I was given. And I do not feel I was wrong

in doing so, sir."

Calley said he fired fewer than 18 rounds from his M16 automatic rifle during an infantry assault on My Lai. Among his targets, he added, were Vietnamese men, women and children in a ditch. He denied a sizable number of other civilian murders charged against him.

In admitting that he directed a mass execution of unresisting Vietnamese men, women and chil-

dren—the government set the total at 70—at the irrigation ditch east of My Lai, the 27-year-old Calley testified:

"That was my order, sir, that was the order of the day."

"And who gave you the order?" he was asked.

"My company commander, sir, Capt. Ernest Medina," the defendant replied.

As for his feelings that Saturday morning in My Lai, Calley

said:

"I was—I guess hyper is the right word. I'd say I was keyed up. My mind was psychologically set to do battle. I was tense and nervous, I was definitely hyper."

However, Calley, on the stand for the second day, flatly denied he ever was in the area of a trail intersection in the village. There, the government charged, he directed and took part in the separate extermination of 30 other

Vietnamese civilians.

Calley is charged with the premeditated murder in the shooting of 102 Vietnamese civilians at My Lai. The maximum penalty upon conviction is death.

The defendant recounted two briefings on the eve of the My Lai operation, both of which he said were conducted by Medina.

Calley said Medina told his officers and men that "all civilians had left the area, that there were

no civilians in the area and anyone there was to be considered an enemy."

Q. Do you have any recollection of anybody asking Capt. Medina about civilians?

A. I believe somebody asked if that meant women and children. He said that meant everything or he said he meant everything.

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