

VOICE: Lieutenant William Calley

Lt. Calley was charged with the premeditated murder of over 100 civilians in violation of Article 118 of Uniform Code of Military Justice. This is the testimony Lt. Calley gave as he took the witness stand at his own trial in March 1970.

PROSECUTOR GEORGE LATIMER: There has been some information disclosed that you heard before the court that you stood there at the ditch for a considerable period of time; that you waited and had your troops organized, groups of Vietnamese thrown in the ditch and knocked them down in the ditch or pushed them in the ditch and that you fired there for approximately an hour and a half as those groups were marched up. Did you participate in any such shooting or any such event?

LT. CALLEY: No, sir, I did not.

PROSECUTOR GEORGE LATIMER: Did you at any time direct anybody to push people in the ditch?

LT. CALLEY: Like I said, I gave the order to take those people through the ditch and had also told Meadlo if he couldn't move them, to waste them, and I directly -- other than that, there was only that one incident. I never stood up there for any period of time. The main mission was to get my men on the other side of the ditch and get in that defensive position, and that is what I did, sir.

PROSECUTOR GEORGE LATIMER: Now, why did you give Meadlo a message or the order that if he couldn't get rid of the to waste them?

LT. CALLEY: Because that was my order, sir. That as the order of the day, sir.

PROSECUTOR GEORGE LATIMER: Who gave you that order?

LT. CALLEY: My commanding officer, sir.

PROSECUTOR GEORGE LATIMER: He was?

LT. CALLEY: Captain Medina, sir.

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What do you mean you weren't discriminating?

LT. CALLEY: I didn't discriminate between individuals in the village, sir. They were all the enemy, they were all to be destroyed, sir....

PROSECUTOR GEORGE LATIMER: How did you know they were slowing you down?

LT. CALLEY: Well, I generally know how South Vietnamese people move, and if you are going to move South Vietnamese people, you are not going to move them very fast, sir.

PROSECUTOR GEORGE LATIMER: Why did you tell Captain Medina they were slowing you down?

LT. CALLEY: Because I knew they were slowing me down. It was another element that I had to move. . .

SOURCE: Linder, Douglas. "The My Lai Courts Martial 1970." Famous American Trials. 2009. University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) School of Law. 17 Mar 2009. <http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/mylai/mylai.htm>