

Casket Guard For Kennedy Is Viet Casualty

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Washington—Samuel R. Bird, the young ramrod-straight Army officer who, as commander of the casket detail, shepherded the body of John F. Kennedy through the weekend of the assassination in November, 1963, is recovering from severe wounds suffered in combat in Vietnam.

Capt. Bird, now 27, is bedridden in a neurosurgical ward at Brooke Army Hospital in San Antonio, Tex.

Since his transfer to Brooke he has received messages of encouragement from Sen. Robert F. Kennedy (D-N.Y.)—who also extended Mrs. John F. Kennedy's concern—and from author William Manchester.

The then-1st Lt. Bird was a subordinate but often-pictured figure in Manchester's narration of the Nov. 22-25 weekend, "The Death of a President."

Wounded by Mortar

Capt. Bird was wounded by mortar and gunfire on his birthday, Jan. 27, as he jumped from a helicopter during a fight between elements of his Company B, Second Battalion, 1st Cavalry (Air Mobile) Division and a battalion of Viet Cong in the Central Highlands.

He suffered a critical wound on the right side of the head, a broken right leg and a shattered left ankle. After hospitalization in an Army hospital near Yokohama, Japan, he was flown to Brooke on March 23.

Capt. Bird has been nominated for a bronze star for his role in an engagement near the Cambodian border in October, 1966.