

8 Berets Arrive In Calif.

AP 10/3/69
Reuters

TRAVIS A.F.B., Calif., Oct. 2—Eight Green Berets formerly charged with murdering a South Vietnamese double agent were all back in the United States today, presenting a united front of innocence.

Sgt. Alvin Smith, 41, of Naples, Fla., last of the men to return from Vietnam, spoke out on the case for the first time last night to seal over a rift said to have developed between himself and the other seven.

"I say there was no murder," the lean, heavily tanned sergeant declared as he stepped off an airliner which brought him back to America 16 hours behind the rest of the group.

The comment echoed that of Col. Robert Rheault, former commander of U.S. Special Forces in Vietnam, who flew in early yesterday morning and flatly denied he or his men executed Thai Thac Chuyen, a suspected double agent.

The Army dropped all charges against the Green Berets earlier this week in a sudden decision which involved President Nixon.

Although the White House previously denied Mr. Nixon took a part in the case, it conceded yesterday that the President approved the refusal of the Central Intelligence Agency to let its agents testify in the trial of six of the eight accused Green Berets.

It was the CIA action that led the Army to abandon its suit.

Smith, given immunity from prosecution together with W. O. Edward Boyle, sought last night to quash persistent rumors it was he who lifted the lid on the entire affair by telling high ranking military officials that the Green Berets executed Chuyen.