Felt Actions Necessary, Ex-Beret Says

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Robert F. Marasco, former Army captain and a key figure in the Green Beret spy case, reads some mail he has received as his parents' home in Bloomfield, N. J., where he is recovering from injuries he received last October in a traffic accident.

BLOOMFIELD, N. J. — "Anything we did in Vietnam we felt was necessary, justified and approved," said former Army Capt. Robert F. Marasco.

The tall, dark-haired man who was a key figure in the Green Beret spy ease, was relaxing at his parents' home, where he is gradually recovering from critical injuries received in a traffic accident last October.

Speaking softly, a trace of bewilderment in his voice, Marasco went on, "Aside from the standard answers—you stole a box of C rations, therefore you must be punished—there was nothing." In late September the charges were abruptly dropped because, according to Secretary of the Army Stanley Resor, the Central Intelligence Agency would not permit its agents to testify in court.

The eight Green Beret soldiers were returned to the United States and in October Col. Robert Rheault, the commander of the Special Forces in Vietnam, and Marasco resigned their commissions.

"I DECIDED that it wasn't the kind of organization I wanted to devote my life to," the 27-year-old Marasco said.

"I felt I couldn't work for any kind of organization, military or civil-ian, that did not stand behind its people." "I'm not anti-Army or anti-military," he added. "It was just a very unfortunate situation and a few people involved in the situation are not on the top of good-guy list." In fact, leaving the Army was for Marasco a rather painful experience. He had found military intelligence challenging and he was considered quite good at it.

Before enlisting and going through Officer's Candidate School, Marasco had been a million-dollar-a-year life insurance salesman. Now, however, he feels somewhere the drive and desire needed for selling are gone from him.

AND ALTHOUGH his former employer has talked with him about a supervisory or managerial job, he is not overly enthusiastic about that either. He has thought about working for the CIA but in light of his recent experience, that seems an unlikely possibility.

Marasco was disappointed that instead of clearly absolving the Green Berets of murder allegations, Resor said in his statement when the case was dropped that the "acts charged, but not proved, represent a fundamental violation of Army regulations, orders and principles." Despite the lack of official exoneration, Marasco said he believes a large segment of the American public is in sympathy with him and the other Green Berets.

While they were in detention in Longbinnb, he and the others got thousands of cards and letters.

AND WHEN he was hospitalized, Marasco continued to receive mail from all over the country from people, he said, "who had followed the case and were apparently upset, felt we had got a bad deal." The mail and the gifts "really made me feel great," Marasco said. "I thought, 'maybe everything was worth it after all.'"