

7 GREEN BERETS OUT OF STOCKADE

Men Held in Vietnam Case
Put in Ordinary Quarters

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Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Aug. 18 — The Special Forces officers and men held in a stockade in connection with the reported slaying of a Vietnamese intelligence agent were transferred today to ordinary Army quarters.

The move was made less than two weeks after the Army disclosed that the eight soldiers of the Special Forces, or Green Berets, were being held pending an investigation that could result in court-martial charges of murder and conspiracy to commit murder. The case, surrounded by mystery, has resulted in charges and denials of involvement by the United States Central Intelligence Agency.

Sources familiar with the investigation have disclosed that the Vietnamese whose death is at issue was a double agent who had betrayed an allied intelligence network monitoring infiltration on the Cambodian border. It has been asserted that he was killed on instructions from the C.I.A., an assertion

Continued on Page 13, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 6

that responsible Washington officials emphatically deny.

Six officers and one sergeant had been held for nearly a month in five-by-seven-foot mesh-topped cells in the maximum-security section at Longbinh, northeast of Saigon.

Today the officers were moved to bachelor officer quarters elsewhere on the Longbinh post. They were given individual rooms with air-conditioning, showers, refrigerators and beer.

They were joined by Col. Robert B. Rheault, 43 years old, of Vineyard Haven, Mass., the former commander of all Special Forces in Vietnam, who had been held in a house trailer on the base in connection with the case.

According to a visitor who saw them today, the officers had freedom of movement in the immediate area of their new quarters and were guarded by two unarmed military policemen.

In an announcement of the transfer the Army said:

"The six officers and one warrant officer charged are confined to a B.O.O.-type building and an adjacent mess hall. The enlisted man charged is under similar confinement in a different area. Isolation of the prisoners, which was necessary during one phase of the investigation, no longer is required."

Petition Was Denied

Last Friday the Army denied a petition to release the men from the stockade on the ground that the seriousness of the charges prohibited it.

The petition had been filed by George W. Gregory, a civilian attorney for Maj. Thomas C. Middleton, 30, of Jefferson, S.C., one of those in custody.

Besides Colonel Rheault and Major Middleton, those being held are Maj. David E. Crew, 33, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Capt. Leland J. Brumley, 26, of Duncan, Okla.; Chief Warrant Officer 2 Edward M. Boyle, 26, of New York; Capt. Robert F. Marasco, 27, of Bloomfield, N.J.; Capt. Budge E. Williams, 28, of Athens, Ga., and Sgt. 1st Cl. Alvin L. Smith, 41, of Naples, Fla.

Resor Going to Vietnam

WASHINGTON, Aug. 18. (UPI)

—Secretary of the Army Stanley R. Resor flew to Asia today on a trip that will include a visit to the war zone and a review of the investigation in the Special Forces case in South Vietnam.

The trip will take him to Hawaii, Guam, South Korea and Japan as well as Vietnam.

Meanwhile Representative L. Mendel Rivers, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, called on the Army to release the eight men under detention so that they can prepare their defense.

A Pentagon spokesman said that Mr. Resor's trip had been scheduled for some time, but that the Secretary would participate in "a careful review" of the Special Forces case.

Two Army legal officers, Maj. Cobert Comeau and Capt. Stephen M. Sacks, are also being dispatched to South Vietnam to keep watch on the case, the Pentagon said, adding:

"A careful review will be made to determine what information may be made public without prejudice any potential prosecution and without compromising the rights of any potential defendants."

The Army has been under criticism from members of Congress for its handling of the case. Little information has been disclosed.

Mr. Rivers, in a letter to Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird, voiced objections to the treatment of the accused and to the withholding of information about the case.

"Frankly, the members of the Committee on Armed Services are getting a little bit disturbed by the manner in which the only information made available to us comes from the newspapers," Mr. Rivers wrote.