

Pentagon Didn't Know

Beret Arrests a Surprise

WASHINGTON — (UPI) — The Army says eight members of its Green Beret Special Forces were arrested and charged with murder in Vietnam without any advance notification to the Pentagon.

A letter dated Aug. 16 by Army Undersecretary Thaddeus Beal to Rep. Peter Rodino, (D-N.J.) and released at the Pentagon today, said:

"To the best of my knowledge, no official in the Pentagon was informed prior to the arrests being made."

Beal's letter dealt with a list of 17 questions submitted by Rodino, who has been interceding in behalf of Capt. Robert Marasco, Bloomfield, N.J., one of the accused men.

To five of the questions, Beal said "information is not available at Army headquarters," while to the other questions his answers were often partial.

Asked whether the victim was in fact a spy employed by the United States and suspected also of dealing with the Communists, Beal said:

"The individual's employment status and confirmation of his death have not been furnished to Army headquarters by the field command."

As to the man's identity, Beal referred to "press reports" that he was Chu Yen Thai Khac. A lawyer for one of the accused Berets has said the man was working as a double agent for the United States and North Vietnam.

Beal told Rodino that "information has been received that Capt. Marasco suspected the victim to be a North Vietnamese army agent."

Asked by Rodino if the army had a policy for dealing with double agents, Beal replied "yes" but added:

"This information is contained in classified Army and defense intelligence agency regulations and manuals."

Without being specific, Beal said "Army staff experience indicates" the Green Berets were not taking orders from anyone outside the military chain of command.

There have been reports they were under orders of the Central Intelligence Agency.