30 Feet Away

Newsmen Can't Query Berets

LONG BINH (Vietnam)—(AP)—The U.S. Army let newsmen look today at some of the Green Beret officers it is holding under murder charges but made the correspondents stay 30 feet away so they couldn't question them.

The seven officers and a sergeant accused of conspiring tto murder a Vietnamese double agent were released from close confinement in the Long Binh Army stockade yesterday and confined to regular billets.

As Chairman L. Mendel Rivers of the House Armed Services Committee j o i n e d the critics of the secrecy with which the Army has surrounded the case, the U.S. C'o m m a n d gave newsmen their first glimpse of Col. Robert B. Rheault and his subordinates since they were arrested a month ago.

'Good Condition'

Rheault, of Vineyard Haven, Mass., is the former commander of all Special Forces in Vietnam.

At noon, all seven officers walked out of their billets and went to a nearby mess hall. They all appeared relaxed and in good condition.

The enlisted man in the case, Sgt. Alvin L. Smith Jr., of Naples, Fla., was not with

—From Page 1

the officers. He is under confinement at an enlisted men's billet in Long Binh.

Criticism of the Army's handling of the case mounted in Washington, and it was certain to be a priority item of discussion for Secretary of the Army Stanley Resor. who left Washington yesterday for a Pacific tour including Saigon.

Pentagon Action

The Pentagon announced that Resor in the meantime is sending two legal officers to Saigon to assemble a dossier on the case.

"On the basis of the secretary's visit and the report from the two officers." the Depfense Department said, "a careful review will be made to determine what information may be made public without prejudicing any potential prosecution and without compromising the rights of any potential defendants."

Rivers, South C a r o l i n a D e m o c r a t, wrote Defense Secretary Melvin Laird that "this case is going from bad to worse, and the American people are entitled to know the facts involved."