

AUGUST 20, 1969

Army Resumes Pretrial Probe In Beret Case

LONG BINH, Vietnam (AP) — The U.S. Army today resumed its preliminary investigation to determine whether eight Green Berets accused of killing a Vietnamese double agent will be brought to trial.

As the hearing resumed 12 miles north of Saigon, Army Secretary Stanley R. Resor arrived in South Vietnam with a report on the Green Beret case as one of his chief objectives. He came on an inspection trip planned for some time but congressional criticism of the Army's handling of the case moved it to the top of his agenda.

THE PRETRIAL investigation, similar to a grand jury proceeding, began in mid-July but was halted Aug. 2.

Henry B. Rothblatt, a civilian lawyer from New York City representing three of the men, predicted the investigation would be completed tomorrow and that all eight would be freed.

"If ever I've witnessed a weak case, this is it," he said, adding the Army has yet to produce a witness to the slaying, which reportedly occurred June 20.

ROTHBLATT and another civilian attorney, George Gregory of Cheraw, S.C., told newsmen they will move for the dismissal of charges against the men at the end of the investigation. Gregory is defending one of the eight men in the case.

Rothblatt said only two witnesses testified briefly during the day-long session today and both were called by the Army. He said one was an enlisted man and the other a civilian.

Among the eight men charged is the former commander of all Special Forces

troops in Vietnam, Col. Robert Rheault of Vineyard Haven, Mass.

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