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Green Beret Says He Is Held for 'Political Reasons'

ATHENS, Ga., Aug. 27 (UPI) — An officer in the United States Army's Special Forces says he and seven others accused of killing a Vietnamese national are being held by the Army for "political reasons."

Capt. Budge E. Williams wrote his father from an army stockade in South Vietnam that the first hearing for the Special Forces, or Green Berets, looked like the Nuremberg war trials all over again.

"I did not get a lawyer until three days after I asked for one," he wrote. "There were lawyers available on the post. Charges are supposed to be read in 24 hours. We waited a week.

"It was two weeks before the hearings started. Definite coercion was used in getting a statement from a witness."

Captain Williams and his companions were lodged in solitary confinement at Long Binh, South Vietnam, for 30 days.

"The Humane Society," the captain wrote his father, Charles Williams, "wouldn't allow a dog to be penned up like this for a month."

His cell was about 5 by 7 feet. He was in solitary confinement from July 19 until Aug. 18 before being shifted to confinement in a barracks. The eight men are still in detention while the Army decides whether to try them.

While in solitary confinement, Captain Williams wrote, there was only one opening in his sealed room. The roof was made of tin and the temperature soared.

Banged on Cell Door

To go to the toilet, he said, he had to bang on his cell door to raise a guard, and then he might or might not get a response.

"The only thing that keeps me going," he wrote three days before his release from solitary, "is knowing some day I will be free again.

"The simple freedoms of getting a Coke or taking a walk or going to the bathroom when you want are so great."

The first thing on Captain

Williams's mind was keeping the situation from his mother. "Don't tell mother," he instructed his father, "unless you have to."

But two weeks later he wrote: "I have just been informed that there will be a news release. I guess you better

tell mother before she gets it on TV."

He said the Army promised that a telegram would be delivered in advance of the news release but it did not arrive in time. A neighbor watching television called and told Mrs. Williams that her son had been

charged with murder.

Captain Williams later wrote: "I guess you are wondering why we were charged with murder. I have asked myself the same question a thousand times. 'I can't help but think we are being held here on political reasons' only."