

San Francisco Chronicle 17
Fri., Aug. 29, 1969 ☆☆



UPI Telephoto

COL. MICHAEL HEALY
A Beret veteran

New Officer To Command Green Berets

Saigon

A new officer takes over tomorrow as commander of the Green Berets, in Vietnam, whose image has been tarnished by the arrest of their former chief and seven others on murder charges.

An Army spokesman said yesterday that Colonel Michael D. Healy, a Green Beret veteran, would take over as commander of the U.S. Special Forces.

He succeeds Colonel Alexander Lemberes, 43, Sparks, Nev., who assumed command July 21 after Colonel Robert B. Rheault, 43, and

seven other Green Berets were arrested in the alleged death of a Vietnamese.

TEMPORARY

The spokesman said Lemberes' assignment had been temporary and he will return to the United States for treatment of an ankle broken July 26 in a parachute training jump.

Until recently Healy had commanded the 1st Brigade of the U.S. 9th Infantry Division. It was pulled out of the war under President Nixon's order withdrawing 25,000 U.S. troops from Vietnam. Healy accompanied the brigade to Hawaii for deactivation, then returned to South Vietnam this week.

As his replacement was being announced, Lemberes appeared on an Armed Forces television program and praised the work of the Green Berets in civic action programs.

LUSTER

Lemberes speech apparently was an attempt to restore some luster to the Green Berets in the wake of the charge against the eight.

The Army announced Aug. 6 that Rheault, of Vineyard Haven, Mass., six of his intelligence officers, and a sergeant had been charged with murder and conspiracy to murder in the alleged death of a Vietnamese man. Some military sources have said the man worked for both the Green Berets and the North Vietnamese.

An Army board completed investigation of the case Aug. 21. Rheault and the seven others have been confined to the U.S. Army complex at Long Binh, 12 miles northeast of Saigon.

Associated Press