



UPI Telephoto

Special Forces Captain Robert Marasco was accused by the Army as the 'trigger man' in the case. See Page 1.

Strange Confinement

A Key Beret Case Figure in Limbo

Long Binh, South Vietnam

"I got a medal down in Saigon last year when me and another guy pulled a lot of people out of a fire.

"I sent it to my wife and she made a big thing out of it. She said I was a hero and all this junk.

"It's kind of interesting to note that the Army gives me a medal and then throws me in jail — gives me a medal for saving about 150 Vietnamese people, and then

Chief Warrant Officer Edward M. Boyle broke off his sentence, drew his face into a quick grimace and squeezed his intertwined fingers.

Last Thursday, the 26-year-old Special Forces intelligence expert was living in confinement with six Green Beret officers awaiting the Army's decision on whether they would be court-martialed on charges of murder and conspiracy.

Yesterday, Boyle sat on his bed in a small room in the

middle of a battalion of military policemen about a half mile away from his still-confined colleagues. He wore an olive-drab baseball cap instead of his green beret. He has torn off his Special Forces arm patch — in order, he said, to be discreet.

His year's tour in Vietnam ended on July 27, he said, but the Army will not permit him to leave even though charges of murder and conspiracy against him were not referred to a court-martial for trial.

He said he wants to see his 24-year-old wife, Dorothy, in Baltimore "to talk over the biggest decision I will ever have to make in my life." He added that his relationship with the Army is finished, even if he should be proven innocent.

"They're going to try to tell us that it's not going to affect our careers," he said with a smirk.

Boyle is not regarded as the key figure in the controversial case involving the alleged murder of a Vietnamese believed to have been a double agent.

The case resulted in the arrest of Boyle along with six other Green Beret officers and an enlisted man. The group included Colonel Robert B. Rheault, the former commanding officer of Special Forces in Vietnam.

KEY

Attorneys for the defendants said that they thought the Army's case rested on whether Boyle could be "broken down" in order to testify for the prosecution.

Shortly before the Army announced last Thursday its decision to prosecute the six Special Forces officers in the case, an official walked into Boyle's room and told him that he had a telephone call at Army headquarters, down the road. The official added, Boyle said, that he should bring along his shaving gear.

"That's kind of ridiculous because I don't usually shave when I'm talking on the phone," Boyle said. "I mean



AP Wirephoto

EDWARD BOYLE Surrounded by MPs

it was so obvious."

Instead of being taken to headquarters, Boyle was driven in the other direction to the 720-military police battalion headquarters and given a bed in a room with a military police officer.

The Army official told Boyle that the charges against him are "being held in abeyance" pending the outcome of the trials of the other Green Berets. In the meantime, Boyle was assigned to temporary duty in the motor pool maintenance office of the military police detachment.

The official also handed Boyle a statement signed by Major General George L. Mabry, the convening officer in the case, granting him immunity from prosecution as soon as he testified against the other Green Berets.

LOYALTY

Boyle said that the granting of immunity is "foul play" by the Army. He said that he has never asked for immunity in the case and is still loyal to his fellow Green Berets.

"It wasn't an offer, I just got it," he said.

Boyle, who enlisted in the Army after graduation from high school, spoke to a reporter in the presence of his civilian attorney, Henry B. Rothblatt.

He said that since his arrival at the motor pool, he had been given "absolutely no work to do." However, he

eats, drinks and associates constantly with military police officers, including some members of the Criminal Investigation Detachment — the military group in charge of investigating the Green Beret case.

He is not permitted to visit or talk with the other six Special Forces officers still under guard.

ACCUSATION

Rothblatt accused the Army of attempting to apply pressure to get Boyle to testify against his colleagues. He also said that the Army has attempted to persuade the warrant officer to dismiss Rothblatt as his attorney.

"It's obvious that they're trying to break him down," Rothblatt said. "He's their only hope."

New York Times