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Green Berets Head for Homes as Backers Express

The eight men who were, until this week, the defendants in the Green Beret murder case headed for their homes and a weekend of seclusion yesterday amid expressions of bitterness over the treatment they had received from the Army.

"It was a fiasco all the way through, mishandled and mismanaged by the Army," said Mrs. Jessie Middleton, the mother of Maj. Thomas C. Middleton Jr., one of the eight men who had been charged with the murder of a Vietnamese civilian alleged to have been a double agent.

Mrs. Middleton, a gray-haired teacher of English was among 300 persons who waited five hours at the Airport in Columbia, S. C., for the 29-year-

old major, who was delayed by a driving rainstorm.

The foul weather and the delay created "a perfect ending" for the case, she said bitterly.

Although there are plans for a "Welcome Home Tommy" banner to be strung across the post office in Jefferson, Major Middleton's home town, his mother said:

"He does not consider himself a hero."

But others among the 602 people in Jefferson to, and of them, said Mayor F. M. Hartman, are "really sore" about what they see as the Army's betrayal of Major Middleton and his comrades.

"Public opinion is the only thing that saved that boy," said

R. A. Raley, joining in a general discussion of the case among the farmers sitting on the porch of Raley's Hardware Store on Jefferson's main street.

The feeling was the same in Athens, Ga., the home town to which Capt. Budge E. Williams returned quietly at dawn yesterday.

"It looked like the Army had really pulled a boner," said one resident. "Any one knew Williams knew he wasn't that type of person. He was an Eagle Scout and that sort of thing."

The eight men were charged with killing Thai Khac Chuyen last June 20 and dumping his body into the South China Sea. They were all returned from

Vietnam to Travis Air Force Base, Calif., on Wednesday, after being released from captivity at the order of Army Secretary Stanley R. Resor.

Mr. Resor said that a court-martial had been made impossible by the Central Intelligence Agency's lack of cooperation.

Col. Robert B. Rheault, who before his arrest was the commander of all the Special Forces personnel in Vietnam, said that he was going to Washington soon to discuss the handling of the case with the "big brass."

The colonel, who is spending several days at his home in Brookline, Mass., said of the outcome in the case: "We knew that reason and justice would ultimately prevail."

A divergent view was expressed by Capt. Robert F. Marasco, who said at his home in Bloomfield, N. J.:

"I don't feel I've been exonerated. I only wish the whole thing would come out."

In two suburbs of Baltimore, Maj. David E. Crew and Chief Warrant Officer Edward M. Boyle said that they planned to spend at least the beginning of their 30-days leaves at home with their families.

Bitterness

The two other Green Berets in the case are Sgt. 1st Cl. Alvin L. Smith Jr., reported on his way to his home in Naples, Fla., and Capt. Leland J. Brumley of Duncan, Okla., who stayed in California with his wife.