

ONE GREEN BERET IS 'DYING TO TALK'

But Fears He Would Imperil
People Still in Vietnam

By STEVEN V. ROBERTS

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ATLANTA, Oct. 2 — Capt. Budge E. Williams coiled and uncoiled his seat belt as the jetliner flew over American soil. Scarcely more than a day before he had been in an Army stockade in Vietnam, charged with murder. Now he was going home.

"I regard all enemies as dangerous," he said to a companion early this morning on flight from San Francisco. "When you find one, you kill him. That's what they pay me for, not to worry about his social problems."

Captain Williams was one of eight Special Forces or Green Beret, soldiers charged with murdering Thai Khac Chuyen, an American espionage agent suspected of also working for the Vietcong. The charges were dropped when the Central Intelligence Agency refused to allow its personnel to testify in open court.

The 27-year-old soldier, the son of a grocery owner in Athens, Ga., would not discuss his case directly. "We feel there has been a lot of misinformation around, and I'm dying to talk," he said. "But if I do, people who are still over there, people I trusted and who trusted me, would be in danger. It's not worth it."

Wears Borrowed Uniform

Captain Williams was wearing a borrowed tan uniform with a bronze star pinned to his chest.

"I left with little more than the clothes on my back," he



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Capt. Budge E. Williams at news conference yesterday.

said with a grim laugh. "We had about 10 hours to leave the country. They sure wanted to get rid of us fast. They must have set a record in getting us out."

After they were first arrested in June, the Green Berets were very bitter, he said. "There was a tremendous temptation to just write a long letter to someone telling the whole story, but I guess we all managed to control ourselves."

After several weeks, the soldiers became used to confinement, he said. They had an hour a day for exercise and spent much of their remaining time reading and answering mail. One book the captain remembered reading was the novel "True Grit."

The men knew their mail was being censored, he said, and some letters they wrote that referred to the case or to the stockade at Longbinh were

returned. "But we found other ways to get our mail out," he said.

One day Capt. Leland Brumley, who occupied the cell next to Captain Williams's, received a letter informing him that because of his outstanding record the Army would send him to graduate school.

Confident of His Release

"Why don't you show the letter to the warden?" Captain Williams called over the wall to his buddy. "If you're such an outstanding officer, maybe he'll give you an extra hour a day outside."

He was always confident that he would not be convicted, Captain Williams said. "We knew once certain information got out, we wouldn't have much trouble." That information, he implied, was the involvement of the Central Intelligence Agency in the case.

Captain Williams had about six weeks remaining in his second year-long tour in South Vietnam. He left the country with considerable resentment, not only because of the murder charges but because of the behavior of the South Vietnamese he had worked with.

"Some of them were as loyal as an old hound dog in Georgia," he said in his thick drawl. "But a lot of them were just petty thieves. You couldn't imagine how much stuff is stolen over there. It's just incredible."

Americans who tried to thwart the thievery sometimes got into trouble with their superiors over South Vietnamese active in the black market, he said.

"Two M.P.'s accidentally walked into a black market meeting in Saigon last week and were shot in cold blood," he said. "I carried a weapon with me at all times. I've had South Vietnamese pull guns on me several times."