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**Army to Give
Copter Pilot
Mental Test**

By Adam Shaw

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Robert Kenneth Preston, the 20-year-old private who landed a stolen Army helicopter on the White House lawn Sunday morning, voluntarily returned to Army custody yesterday after the Secret Service dropped a charge of unlawful entry to the White House grounds.

The Army immediately returned the youthful-looking soldier to the psychiatric ward of Walter Reed Army Hospital after his brief arraignment in D.C. Superior Court. The Secret Service dropped the unlawful entry charge on the condition that Preston surrender to the military.

Asked whether the Army would court-martial the helicopter mechanic, Joseph J. Hedley, a spokesman at Fort Meade where Preston was stationed, said, "When and if he gets out of Walter Reed the answer is yes."

After his midday arraignment, Preston helpfully lifted his Army raincoat sleeves to be handcuffed and was led away through a

See PRESTON, C4, Col. 1



Associated Press

Pfc. Robert K. Preston, left, is led from U.S. Superior Court here yesterday after the U.S. dropped charges against him for landing helicopter at the White House.

PRESTON, From C1

barrage of reporter's questions, most of which he refused to answer.

Asked whether he stole the helicopter because he was angry over washing out of Army flight school, Preston muttered, "Could be."

Asked if he was sorry about the uproar he caused by buzzing houses in Anne Arundel County, cars on the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, the Washington Monument, and finally the White House, he managed a tight smile and replied, "I'll know later."

Metropolitan Police Sgt. Tony Rogers, who had custody of Preston while he was being arraigned, said the young man from Panama City, Fla., told him he landed on the White House south lawn rather than fly back to Ft. Meade because he wanted to "go out in a blaze of glory."

Rogers said Preston told him he had "nothing else to do" on Saturday night since his girl friend "stood me up on Friday."

Rogers, who talked to Preston while the private was being charged at the second district headquarters after his capture by Secret Service agents and Executive Protection Service officers, said Preston told him he had considered flying back to Ft. Meade, but decided that "if I went back to the Army, they'd just put me in a stockade."

So, according to Rogers' account, Preston decided to give himself up "in a blaze of glory" by landing his olive drab UH1B Huey helicopter in front of the White House.

The landing, in a blaze of gunfire from White House guards, followed a two-hour flight that ranged between Ft. Meade and Washington.

President Nixon and his family were not in the White House at the time, and no one was injured except Preston, who suffered minor flesh wounds from the volley of shotgun fire leveled at him by EPS officers.

How long Preston will stay at Forest Glenn, Walter Reed's psychiatric ward in Montgomery County, "depends on the length of the evaluation" tests, Peter Eskere, a hospital spokesman said.

The Army spokesman said "everyone at the post (Ft. Meade) is a little embarrassed and surprised" by the incident, particularly because "Preston had a fine reputation as a model soldier."

Despite the ease with which Preston's stolen helicopter penetrated the airspace over the White House, Secret Service spokesman Jack Warner said yesterday his men were implementing "no new security measures," but were "always evaluating new procedures."

Asked by a reporter whether the Secret Service had ever imagined the possibility of someone flying over

or into the White House, Warner said, "It wasn't beyond our imagination," and then reiterated that new procedures were always being evaluated to protect the President.

At Key Biscayne, where the President was spending the holiday weekend, White House aides said the incident was "under study."

In Preston's hometown of Panama City, Joe Ashbrook who had taught Preston aviation technology at Gulf Coast Community College said, "He is not the type of individual I would have expected it of, I'm amazed to even hear of him doing such a thing."