

'Trigger Man' in Beret Case Named

Examiner News Services

SAIGON — The official charges in the Green Beret murder case identify Capt. Robert Marasco, 27, of Bloomfield, N.J., as the trigger man, sources close to the investigation said today.

Details of the charges against Marasco and five other Green Beret officers were expected to be released officially within 24 hours.

The victim, identified unofficially as a Vietnamese named Thai Khac Chuyen, has been described as a double agent.

The sources said Marasco is accused of shooting Chuyen on June 20 and that Col. Robert Rheault, 43, of Vineyard Haven, Mass., is charged with "conspiring with Marasco to obtain a sack and chains needed to dispose of the body."

Body in Sea

Rheault is the former commander of all Green Berets in South Vietnam.

The sources said Marasco will contend that Chuyen's bullet-riddled body was placed in a weighted sack and dumped into the South China Sea.

A motive has never been

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officially outlined, Chuyen reportedly was found to be spying for both the Green Berets and North Vietnam — and possible South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu in addition — and subsequently was slain by the Green Berets, perhaps on orders from the Central Intelligence Agency. The CIA has denied any role in the case.

Held with Marasco and Rheault and charged with murder and conspiracy to murder are Capt. Budge Williams, 27, of Athens, Ga.; Maj. David Crew, 33, of Cedar Rapid, Iowa, Capt. Leland Brumley, 26 of Duncan, Okla., and Maj. Thomas Middleton Jr., of Jefferson, S.C.

(In Athens, Ga., Guy Scott, an attorney for Williams, said today he has submitted deposition notices to Secretary of CIA Director Richard Helms notifying them to appear Oct. 1 in Resor's office to give testimony in the case.)

Court-Martial

Charges against two other Green Berets, CWO Edward Boyle, 26, of New York City, and SFC Alvin Smith, 41, of Naples, Fla., are being held in abeyance pending outcome of the trials against the six officers.

The court-martial is scheduled to open in about three

weeks at the U.S. Army headquarters in Long Binh.

Lawyers for the six officers lost appeals today to forbid disclosure on the prosecution's case before the Green Berets go on trial.

Army spokesmen then announced the prosecution would make public details of the charges against the men tomorrow.

Cities 'Prejudice'

Henry Rothblatt of New York, civilian attorney for two of the accused men and a third against whom charges are being held in abeyance, said release of the details is "an attempt to inflame the public."

He called it "a deliberate attempt to prejudice the case."

Rothblatt contended the release of details about the case was a violation of the Supreme Court's ruling in which Samuel Sheppard won a new murder trial on grounds that his original trial had received prejudicial publicity.

The defense attorneys appealed directly to President Nixon to free all six men, accusing Gen. Creighton Abrams, the U.S. commander in Vietnam, and other top officers of exerting "command influence" in the case.

They asked Nixon to dismiss the charges.