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Green Berets An AP Follow 500
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Associated Press Writer

Four months after the Army dropped charges in the Green Beret case, six of the eight once accused of murdering a Vietnamese double agent are still in the armed forces—five of them in intelligence units.

Two of the eight, Col. Robert F. Rheault and Capt. Robert F. Marasco, have left the service, saying the case ruined their chances for advancement.

The six still in uniform do not grant interviews, most brushing off questions about the case with "no comment."

Rheault and Marasco have talked about the case but have avoided specifics, saying they are innocent and expressing some bitterness over handling of the case.

Charges against the eight were dropped in September and the men were returned to the United States after the Central Intelligence Agency refused to provide witnesses for scheduled October courts-martial, making it impossible for the men to be tried fairly. The CIA refusal was made "in the interest of national security."

Soon after, Marasco and Rheault resigned their commissions.

"I decided that it wasn't the kind of organization I wanted to devote my life to," said the 27-year-old Marasco, now recuperating in Bloomfield, N.J., from an auto accident. "I felt I couldn't work for any kind of organization, military or civilian, that did not stand behind its people."

"I'm not anti-Army or antimilitary," he said in an interview with the New York Times. "It was just a very unfortunate situation and a few people involved in the situation are now on the top of the good-guy list."

Marasco says he was disappointed that the charges were dropped because he feels it leaves doubt in people's minds about his innocence. But despite the lack of official exoneration, Marasco says many Americans were in sympathy with the eight Berets when the case was high in the news.

Rheault has been living with his wife, Nan, and their three children in an apartment in Brookline, Mass., a suburb of Boston. Attempts to interview him have been unsuccessful.

In an article in Life magazine Nov. 14, Rheault, a West Point graduate, said he left Army because the case had ruled out any advancement in his military career.

"The charges should have been dropped because to conduct the trial would have been dangerous and damaging," Rheault, 44, told Life. "It would have been a travesty of justice to try soldiers doing their job, carrying out their mission and protecting the lives of the men entrusted to them in a wartime situation."

Capt. Leland J. Brumley, another man named in the case, is now assigned to an intelligence unit at Ft. Hood, Tex. He declined to comment on the case when reached by telephone, but later he released a brief statement.

"As far as I'm concerned that case is closed, and I have no further comment on it."

Chief Warrant Officer Edward M. Boyle, also one of the eight, is with the 109th Intelligence Group at Ft. Meade, Md. The two are assigned to administrative and logistical staff duties. They do no teaching or training of troops.

The others are Maj. Thomas Middleton, Headquarters, 3rd Army at Ft. McPherson, Ga.; Sgt. 1 C. Alvin Smith Jr., also at McPherson on detached service from an intelligence unit at Ft. Holabird, Md., and Maj. Budge E. Williams, now assigned to an officers' intelligence school at Ft. Holabird.

End Adv AMS Sun Jan 11 sent Jan 6

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