

Restricted at Base in Britain He Expects Court-Martial

Special to The New York Times

LONDON, June 7—An Air Force officer, placed under restriction on the eve of his departure for the United States and discharge, said today he expected to face a court-martial for taking part in a protest against the Vietnam war.

The officer, Capt. Thomas S. Culver, a member of the Judge Advocate General's staff at Lakenheath Air Force Base, was ordered confined to the base Thursday night, three days after he participated in a brief antiwar protest outside the American Embassy in London. During the protest, in which 300 servicemen were involved,



Capt. Thomas S. Culver

antiwar petitions with 1,000 signatures were handed into the embassy.

"I was the senior man there, probably the only officer, and that's why they're doing this," Captain Culver said today in a telephone interview from his quarters at the base, 82 miles from London. "I expect them to start a court-martial on this."

Petitions Handed In

The officer, and other servicemen who took part in the protest, emphasized at the time that they were merely handing in petitions to the embassy and not participating in a demonstration. They said that the petitions, addressed to the President and Congress, were legal under Air Force regulations that state: "Military personnel may petition or present a grievance to any member of Congress without fear of reprisal."

Captain Culver said that violation of an Air Force regulation forbidding demonstrations overseas carries a maximum penalty of two years hard labor and a dishonorable discharge.

Air Force spokesman at the base as well as at South Ruislip Air Station, headquarters of the Third United States Air Force, said the restriction was ordered by the Lakenheath base commander "pending an investigation." There was no further comment.

Captain Culver was scheduled to leave for the United States Friday for immediate discharge at McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey. The 32-year-old officer has served six years in the Air Force, including one year in South Vietnam.

Captain Culver is a 1960 graduate of Columbia University, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree. He studied law at Stanford University and received a diploma in criminology at Cambridge University in England. He joined the Air Force on a direct commission as a lawyer.

In discussing his reasons for leaving the Air Force, Captain Culver, a bachelor, said tonight: "I don't like the Air Force any more. I found I wasn't especially happy in the military community. I wanted to stay in England as a civilian lawyer."

Air Force Investigation

The officer, who grew up in Westfield, N. J., said he had been told in a letter from his acting wing commander, Col. Jerome F. Naleid, that the Air Force was investigating possible breaches of the regulations that forbid demonstrations of servicemen overseas. The letter was sent in response to a request by Captain Culver on the reason for the restriction.

"If I am court-martialed, this will be an important test case," he said. "A verdict of not guilty would mean that American servicemen all over the world—Vietnam, Thailand, Germany—will be joining in antiwar marches."

The antiwar movement among Air Force enlisted men in Britain, spurred by American students at Oxford, Cambridge and the London School of Economics, includes an underground newspaper called Peace—People Emerging Against Corrupt Establishment. Several civilian members of its staff were scheduled to distribute leaflets tomorrow outside bases protesting Captain Culver's confinement.

There are more than 25,000 United States military personnel in Britain, including 22,000 Air Force men, 3,000 Navy men and about 300 Army men.