

Hero's CO Discharge Rushed

HONOLULU — (UPI) — The Army is speeding up the discharge of a decorated Green Beret paratrooper who has called the Vietnam war “insane and brutal.”

Officials said yesterday they have started processing the “expeditious discharge” of Sgt. Ernest Pounder, 28, on the ground he was a conscientious objector.

Pounder, who had served on the White House security staff of President Kennedy and won 24 medals in Vietnam, told the Army he would not wear his uniform after

Monday because officials were dragging their feet in granting him a discharge.

Proclaiming a “personal victory and one for others in the service who wish to resist,” Pounder said, “I am no longer an instrument of war. My rebirth into the peace movement has begun.”

He said Army bureaucrats had been prodded into quick action by widespread publicity about the case.

“The power of the press is unbelievable,” he said.

A spokesman for Schofield Barracks said the news sto-

ries “caused some push” on Pentagon brass.

Military officials said Pounder would be officially discharged “within a week,” and the soldier said he would take his wife and six children “back home” to Peoria, Ill.

Pounder went to Vietnam in 1964 “100 percent in favor” of America’s role in the war. But, he said, he was quickly disillusioned after viewing “death and destruction” and corruption of South Vietnamese military officials.