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MY LAI

An Officer Talks of an Army 'Purge'

Lincoln, Neb.

Captain Eugene M. Kotouc, who was acquitted of charges stemming from the My Lai massacre, said yesterday the Army is trying to dismiss him because it wants to purge all persons associated with the 1968 incident.

"I think it's just another case of overreaction," the 38-year-old career officer from Humboldt, Neb., told a news conference, adding:

"I have a definite feeling that after all the unfortunate investigations and trials of the My Lai incident, the Army—some persons in the Army — found themselves in rather embarrassing positions. as we all know . . .

"I suppose the best way to purge the Army is just to run everybody out. All the enlisted men with the exception of one right now has been dismissed from the service, against some of their wills. Most of the officers are gone now."

Kotouc, intelligence officer of the task force that raided My Lai, was charged with murder and maiming incidental to the raid, but was exonerated in a court-martial last year.

Notified last May that he was about to be discharged from the Army, Kotouc,

through his attorney, former Nebraska Governor Robert Crosby of Lincoln, is resisting dismissal and currently seeks a hearing before Army Secretary Robert F. Froehlke.

Crosby, at whose office Kotouc met newsmen, said that if necessary, the case could be taken to the courts.

Crosby asserted that favorable officer efficiency reports through most of Kotouc's 14-year career as an

officer, including the most recent one covering service in Germany, contradict Froehlke's report that Kotouc's performance has been substandard. Crosby said Froehlke has received bad information.

Kotouc, with 17 years in the Army, said reduced or eliminated retirement benefits would result from dismissal.

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