

Higher court bars veteran's release

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LOS ANGELES — A Vietnam veteran who held three hostages at gunpoint in an apparent "combat flashback" was released by a Municipal Court judge critical of former President Nixon's pardon, but the order was blocked by a higher court.

The countermanding order came just minutes before John Gabron, 22, of Los Angeles was to be released from jail yesterday to the custody of his psychiatrist.

Judge Gilbert Alston ordered Gabron's release on his own recognizance, saying at the conclusion of a preliminary hearing:

"What I'm about to do is unusual but that seems in vogue these days. If a man who almost wrecked the country can be pardoned, this defendant can be re-

leased to get proper treatment."

But 2½ hours later, as Gabron was almost out the Central jail door, the veteran was ordered retained in custody by Superior Court Judge Raymond Choate, who said he was acting at the request of the district attorney's office.

Gabron was arrested Aug. 4 after holding three men at riflepoint atop a hill in Griffith Park for 3½ hours. Officers said he fired three shots to keep them at bay. Gabron was booked for investigation of kidnaping after he was talked into surrendering by his psychiatrist.

Witnesses at yesterday's hearing testified Gabron told them he was "declaring war" on the Los Angeles Police Department, and that he "wanted to die in a gunfight."