

Militants Stockpile Illegal Guns

By MARTIN WALDRON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON — Agents of the Treasury Department say that militant groups in the United States are arming themselves with illegal .45-caliber and .50-caliber machine guns and submachine guns as well as rifles, handguns, hand grenades, dynamite and other lethal devices.

Although the officials have no estimate of the extent of the caching and say that the situation does not appear critical, the number of weapons and the amount of ammunition seized in the last year indicate that there would be many casualties if conflict should break out between the various armed factions.

Individuals arrested for possession of machine guns or submachine guns during the last year have included members of the Minutemen, the Ku Klux Klan, the Black Panthers, the Liberators and the Mafia.

Agents of the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Division of the Treasury Department, which is charged with the main enforcement of Federal gun laws, together with other police agents, seized caches of illegal automatic weapons in every section of the nation in 1969. Many of the machine guns were foreign made and almost all were at one time military weapons.

"We have no idea how many machine guns or submachine guns are floating around in the United States," said William D. Behen, assistant chief of law enforcement for the division. He said many of them had been circulating since World War I.

In addition to weapons, the police have seized literature that indicates that many militant groups have adopted the guerrilla training tactics of the Army's special forces, the Green Berets.

The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence estimated that there are 90 million firearms in the United States, but Mr. Behen said there might be as many as 200 million. The great preponderance of these weapons, including machine guns and submachine guns, are not registered.

May Own Thousands

Many thousands of outlawed

YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1969

Across the U. S.

weapons are legally in the hands of United States residents. In November of 1968, the Internal Revenue Service allowed the registration of such weapons without prosecution and with a proviso that the information obtained could not be used in court.

The total number of machine guns, submachine guns, sawed-off shotguns, hand grenades and so forth that were registered during the 30-day amnesty period totaled 68,000, the service said, including 17,000 machine guns or submachine guns.

Members and sympathizers of the Minutemen, an ultra right-wing group organized in 1960 by Robert Bolivar DePugh of Independence, Mo., are believed to own thousands of machine guns or submachine guns.

"The right wing seems to have a propensity for automatic weapons," said Mr. Behen.

DePugh, who stockpiled such weapons, is now in prison for violating the Federal Firearms Act.

When he was arrested in Truth or Consequences, N. M., last July 12, DePugh and a companion, Walter P. Peyson of Hazlehurst, Miss., had 48 weapons in their rented house.

The police said the two men also had thousands of rounds of ammunition, large quantities of dynamite, a homemade land mine, hand grenades, bombs fashioned of pipe and powder and nails and blasting caps, cases of fuses, canisters of tear gas, homemade silencers, telescopes for rifles, and stacks of bandoleers and magazines loaded with cartridges.

The biggest seizure of machine guns during the year came at the home of an Illinois Minuteman, Richard A. Laughli Jr., in April.

Laughli had been released in

February from a Federal penitentiary where he had been serving a sentence for illegal manufacturing and sale of firearms.

Ten agents of the firearms division raided his home at Collinsville, Ill., on April 17 and confiscated 605 Thompson submachine guns. The 42-year-old Laughli had bought the guns as scrap metal at a Utah military post in 1964 and was rebuilding them.

"They worked as good as new when he finished with them," said an agent. An example of Laughli's work is kept for display purposes in the offices of the Internal Revenue Service in Washington.

In addition to the submachine guns, the agents found at Laughli's home eight M-2 carbines, 43 rifles, shotguns and pistols, 36,000 rounds of ammunition, 58 antitank grenades, 17 60-millimeter mortar shells, 11 antipersonnel mines, four Army hand grenades, 21 pounds of black powder and two military rockets.

"Laughli is nuts about guns," said one of the Treasury officers. "He told us the only way we could keep him from them was to keep him in jail."

The Minutemen have said they have stockpiled machine guns and such devices as homemade bombs and Molotov cocktails, which are gasoline bombs, for use in guerrilla warfare against Negroes and Jews whom they have labeled as part of a Communist conspiracy to take over the United States.

Visited Bunker

In an article in Playboy magazine in June, Eric Norden, a magazine writer, said he visited a Minuteman bunker near Reading, Pa., in March, 1968.

Mr. Norden said he was escorted to the bunker by Roy E. Frankhauser Jr., Grand Dragon of the Pennsylvania Ku Klux Klan. Mr. Frankhauser was a friend of Dan Burros, a New York City American Nazi party member who committed suicide after his Jewish ancestry was publicized.

Mr. Norden said the Klan-

Minuteman bunker contained several four-foot-long rockets that Mr. Frankhauser said had a range of 30 miles. Mr. Frankhauser said the underground bunker had a laboratory where Minutemen manufactured nitroglycerin.

Many of the weapons seized in the United States in the last year were classed by the police as belonging to right-wing militants although the police did not make a positive identification of the organizations.

As an example, the police would class weapons found

with such paraphernalia as the swastika symbol of the old German National Socialist (Nazi) party as belonging to right-wing militants.

One such instance occurred last Nov. 30, when Treasury agents confiscated 65 foreign-made machine guns in three raids in Southern California. One lot of weapons was found with two automobiles with swastikas on them. Another lot was in a bunker equipped with radar warning devices and an elaborate communications system.

Treasury agents will not discuss the details of many of their gun seizures because investigations are still under way.

On Feb. 1, 1969, the Virginia police arrested David V. Maness, 30 years old, accusing him of dynamiting a synagogue in Prince Georges County on the outskirts of Washington. Maness, who had been convicted seven times of felonies, had in his home 20 rifles and automatic weapons, 25 handguns, 4,000 rounds of ammunition, 38 pounds of dynamite, fuses and detonation tapes, bows and arrows, bayonets and swords, throwing knives, switchblade knives, a pellet gun, brass knuckles and a map showing the location of other synagogues, along with a quantity of Minutemen literature, the arresting officers said.

Seven Minutemen in Seattle were convicted in June, 1968, of conspiring to rob four Seattle suburban banks as a "training exercise" and to raise money for Minutemen operations. DePugh also was charged in this case but has not been tried.

Long Island Seizure

On June 4, 1969, Treasury agents arrested four men on Long Island and seized a .50-caliber machine gun on a tripod, six submachine guns, 10,000 rounds of ammunition, 28 rifles and shotguns, 18 pistols, 19 silencers, 14 flare guns, two dynamite bombs, a telescopic sight and various gun parts.

"We have some reason to believe that some of them may be members of right-wing groups," said Phillip Kopstein, an agent of the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Division, of the four men arrested. He said a large amount of right-wing literature had been found with the weapons. An assistant United States attorney, Lawrence G. Soicher, said there were "indications that the suspects had been supplying all of Brooklyn, particularly the mob," with guns.

Black Panther groups in recent weeks have been raided by the police who suspected

them of stockpiling illegal weapons. A dozen or more Black Panthers and an equal number of police have been shot in gun battles.

"It is evident that the Black Panthers are arming themselves," said Mr. Behen. "We have acquired literature by Black Panthers telling how to make bombs out of ordinary household goods. They are teaching the same tactics which are being taught the special forces of the Army."

Former Green Beret

In his account of his visit to the bunker near Reading, Mr. Norden said that Mr. Frankhauser was accompanied by a former member of the Army Green Berets who had lost a leg in Vietnam.

The Minutemen and the Klan, as well as the Black Panthers, have do-it-yourself kits on the manufacture of homemade bombs.

In addition to the recently publicized raids by the police on Black Panther headquarters in Chicago and Los Angeles, Federal agents have seized Black Panther guns on other occasions.

In April, Treasury agents and the Chicago police sold machine guns to four Black Panthers and then arrested them.

A truckload of stolen shotguns, rifles, pistols and ammunition was confiscated by the Atlanta police. Officers said the guns, which included 200 pistols, 125 rifles and 200 shotguns, were destined for "black militants."

In Seattle, the division's agents raided a Black Panther's home and arrested his wife on a charge of possessing a sawed-off shotgun.

The police in Oakland, Calif., forced their way into an unoccupied apartment and seized a .50-caliber machine gun and 103 rounds of ammunition, some of them tracer bullets. The police said the weapons had been "earmarked for the Black Panthers."

Firebombing in Mobile

Two Negro men were charged with possessing firebombs in Mobile, Ala., by Treasury agents after they were stopped while fleeing from a fire. More than 100 cases of firebombing and arson were reported in Mobile during a year of racial tension.

In Mississippi in July, a self-proclaimed Klan guerrilla fighter, Thomas Albert Tarrants 3d, and an associate were arrested with an "arsenal" that included hand grenades and military weapons. A man who had been standing guard while the other two slept was shot to death by the raiding police. Mafia figures in New York,

New Jersey, Michigan and Illinois have been arrested by Federal agents for possession of illegal weapons.

Treasury officials in Washington believe that the Gun Control Act of 1968 may provide a way to send a number of gangsters to jail. If they have ever been convicted of a felony, the gangsters cannot legally possess a gun.

The trafficking in illegal guns in this country is not limited to right-wing militants. Mr. Behen said his division had information that some factions of Students for a Democratic Society, specifically the Mad Dogs and the Crazies, were arming themselves. But no big gun caches belonging to S.D.S. factions have been seized.

"The left wing seems to have two approaches," said Mr. Behen. "Some shy away from guns because they say it just gives the police an excuse to arrest them."

Although there have been reports that some groups of militants were receiving weapons from outside the country, Mr. Behen said he did not believe this.

"There is no evidence of illegal import of firearms by either the right or left-wing groups," he said.



United Press International
Victor Cizanckas, Police Chief of Menlo Park, Calif., displaying guns and Nazi effects confiscated last February of the "Society of Man" group. Treasury Department agents say militant groups continue to arm themselves.