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SEIZURES NUMEROUS

Militants Storing Arms, T-Men Say

By MARTIN WALDRON

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

"We don't have an estimate of the extent of it," said one Treasury official in an interview. But he said the situation does not appear to be critical.

However, the number of weapons and ammunition seized in the last year indicates there would be many casualties if conflict should break out between the various factions arming themselves.

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 have been circulating since World War I.

In addition to weapons, the police have seized literature that indicates that many mili-

tant 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 there are 90 million firearms in the United States. But 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.

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 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.

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.

The Minutemen have said they have stockpiled machine guns and infernal device, such 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.

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.

Norden said he was escorted to the bunker by Roy E. Frankhauser Jr., grand dragon of the Pennsylvania Ku Klux Klan.

NORDEN SAID the Klan-Minuteman bunker contained several four-foot-long rockets that Frankhauser said had a range of 30 miles. 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.

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