

# Ex-Army Spy Tells 'Menace'

Examiner News Services

CHICAGO — John M. O'Brien, a former soldier who says he spied on civilians for the Army, said today he decided to disclose his activities because he wanted "to make unknowing people aware of a menace that exists."

O'Brien, 26, said at a news conference: "The disclosure of my activities as a former Army intelligence agent is prompted by my personal concern as a citizen of the United States and by my concern for constitutional protections guaranteed all people in our country."

O'Brien said the information gathered was put in what were labeled "subversive files" and forwarded to the Intelligence Command Center at Ft. Holabird, Md.

### Passed to FBI

Information "pertaining to our activities" also was passed on to Chicago police and the FBI, he said.

"The vast majority of the subjects on whom these files were maintained concerned civilians not directly related to the historical military mission," O'Brien said.

The "snooping, watchdog operations" of the Army, he said, included "gathering of information pertaining to the expressed political proclivities, the collection of personalia, the penetration of the disruption of all organizations considered to be against the United States military involvement in Vietnam and selected organizations which expressed their discontent with the foreign and domestic policies of the present administration."

### 'Personalia'

He defined "personalia" to mean any information regarding background or personal activities, but would not spell out what this meant in detail.

O'Brien said he was fearful that if martial law ever were declared massive arrests of civilians might occur.

"During a period of martial law, this information could have conceivably been used to quell dissent from any individual or organization which may possibly have opposed the use of martial law," he said.

O'Brien said "to the best of my knowledge," domestic spying was directed from the Intelligence Command Center at Ft. Holabird.

### Letter to Ervin

Among those whose activities he said he spied upon, O'Brien has listed Sen. Adlai Stevenson III (D-Ill.) former Illinois Gov. Otto Kerner, now a federal judge, and the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, head of Operation Breadbasket, a black rights organization.

O'Brien said he first made the information about his activities available in letters to Sen. Sam J. Ervin (D-N.C.) head of the Senate Constitutional Rights Subcommittee, President Nixon, Sen. Charles Percy (R-Ill.) and newsmen.

O'Brien, a former staff sergeant with the 113th Military Intelligence Group in Evanston, a Chicago suburb, was accompanied by a lawyer at the news conference in Chicago offices of the American Civil Liberties Union.

The lawyer, David Goldberger, ACLU staff counsel, told newsmen that O'Brien



JOHN O'BRIEN, LAWYER GOLDBERGER  
Military roundup of civilians feared

—AP Wirephoto

could not discuss classified materials "because he respects the integrity of the government" and "because he's not interested in violating any laws."

### 'Domestic Spy'

O'Brien said he was proud to have served in the Army up to the point at which he was ordered to engage in spying activities.

He was drafted into the Army in 1965. He said he began intelligence training the next year. He worked in counter-intelligence in Germany from November, 1966, until June, 1969. He was a domestic spy until June, 1970, when he was honorably discharged, he said.

"I was trying to make unknowing people aware of a menace that existed, and might still exist," O'Brien said. He told reporters he believed domestic intelligence "violated the civil liberties of everyone in this room."

O'Brien said his activities involved gathering information on both left and right wing groups. He said he con-

sidered "certain individuals who were superior to me (in the Army) to be politically irrational," but he said no officer ever expressed a desire "for violent overthrow of this form of government."