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Minutemen-Pacifists NL 50

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Associated Press Write

VOLUNTTOWN, Conn. AP. — Raiding Minutemen waged a gun battle with waiting state troopers as they descended on a pacifist camp early Saturday. Four of the raiders, a trooper and a woman resident of the camp were wounded.

The six invaders were arrested. State police, who said they were notified in advance about a planned attack on the New England headquarters of the Committee for Nonviolent Action, were posted in the general area.

When the Minutemen were spotted, said State Police Commissioner Leo J. Mulcahy, "we identified ourselves and the firing began."

Arrested were six Connecticut men, described by Mulcahy as Minutemen—a group said the Federal Bureau of Investigation to be a "secret, extremist and anti-communist organization."

The pacifist center in this eastern Connecticut community is a training ground for pacifist activities.

The raiders—some of them managed to get into the pacifist center's farmhouse—were heavily armed, carried inflammables and wore masks.

Mulcahy said gunfire was exchanged with the invaders in the farmhouse who taped the eyes of two women residents. One of the women, Mrs. Roberta Irask, was shot in the hip by what one of the pacifists said was a "stray round of buckshot."

Mrs. Bradford Lyttle, the other woman, said at least one of the raiders was wearing a gas mask, and that another had a handkerchief over his face. The invaders all wore Army fatigue clothing, she said.

Mulcahy said his troopers staked out the area of the pacifist center after being notified by the FBI of a plan to attack the farmhouse headquarters.

"We had knowledge of what was going to happen," Mulcahy said.

Norbert Carichner, 24, one of the pacifists, said the occupants of the center were not notified by state police about the stakeout.

He said the first indication of something happening came at about 2:45 a.m. when the pacifists' watchdog began to bark.

Then, Mrs. Lyttle said, three men in Army clothing and carrying rifles with bayonets, invaded the farmhouse through a side door.

"I assumed they had come to destroy as many of us as possible," Mrs. Lyttle said at a news conference called by the pacifists hours after the incident.

All six men arrested were charged with conspiracy to commit arson and assault with intent to kill.

They were identified as Louis Rogers, 24, of Lisbon; Thomas J. Hart, 30, of Milford, said by Mulcahy to be the "self-styled leader of the Minutemen"; Alphonse Macha, 29, of Willimantic; Frank D. Barber, 26, of Norwich; Thomas J. Fowler, 21, of Canterbury; and George J. Rodd, 79, of Windham.

Rogers was shot in the face and was taken to Yale-New Haven Hospital. Hart was shot in the left arm, Macha in the arm and leg, and Barber in the left wrist and arm. Fowler and Rodd were not hurt.

State Police Sgt. Stanley Nasiatka was wounded in the foot. Barber is cochairman of the George Wallace-for-President committee in Norwich.

At the time of the incident, some 27 persons were in the pacifist compound, including four children and eight women. Mrs. Lyttle said Barber visited the farmhouse with two other men several days ago. Another of the pacifists said Barber and the others were ushered in, but that no one seemed to know why they visited the center. Mrs. Lyttle said, however, that it was not unusual for persons to stop by and heckle the pacifists. The center, she said, has been the target of harassment and heckling in the past. At the center, persons are trained how to demonstrate peacefully and how to go limp when arrested. In addition, the group's anti-war and pacifist literature is distributed from the headquarters.

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