

DePugh Says He Eluded F.B.I. With Hippie

By DONALD JANSON
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ALBUQUERQUE, N. M., July 17—Robert Bolivar DePugh, the founder and national coordinator of the ultraconservative Minutemen, said today that he and his "executive assistant" had eluded the Federal Bureau of Investigation for a year and a half by traveling as hippies and wearing a variety of other disguises.

In his first interview since his capture Saturday in rural New Mexico, the 46-year-old Missourian said he and Walter Patrick Peyson could have escaped the F.B.I. permanently if they had concentrated on hiding.

Rather, he said, they produced and mailed to other "patriots" in the organization six guerrilla warfare training books and "a million pieces" of anti-Communist literature.

"The remarkable feat," he said, "was not that we eluded the F.B.I. so long but that we were able to do so much organizational work simultaneously."

Interview Behind Bars

The interview was conducted behind bars at the Bernalillo County Jail on the fourth floor of the County Courthouse, where the two men were awaiting transfer to Kansas City, Mo., to face Federal charges of violating the National Firearms Act, a 30-year-old law designed to regulate the manufacture and interstate shipment of certain guns.

The two men went underground 18 months ago after they were indicted in Seattle on charges of conspiring to rob four banks to finance the caching of weapons and ammunition against the day when Communists might seek to take over the Government.

Yesterday and today, the F.B.I. removed thousands of pounds of arms and ammunition from an isolated house south of Truth or Consequences, N. M. Agents said the fugitives had rented the house under aliases.

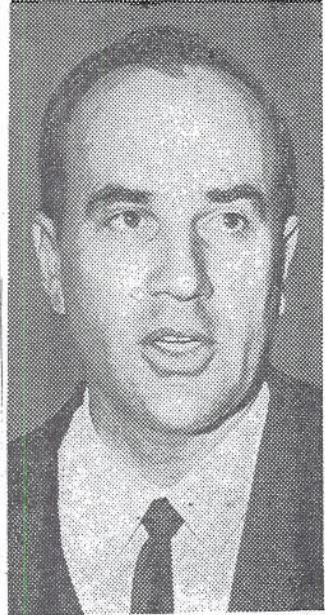
DePugh and Peyson were arrested near the house, which is situated in the desert about 150 miles south of here. Today the F.B.I. completed the removal of more than 100 rifles and other guns, fuses, kegs of powder, camouflaged clothing, maps, a printing press and other gear from the house, a shed and a camper trailer nearby.

Guerrilla Training

The secret, paramilitary Minutemen organization trains its members in survival and

guerrilla warfare techniques to enable them to fight on after any Communist takeover.

A Minuteman recruiting manual warns: "When murdering Communist bands come roaming through your community they must not find a lazy, disarmed people waiting like



Robert Bolivar DePugh

Associated Press

lambs for the slaughter; they must find instead a vigorous and well-armed civilian population."

DePugh said Communist infiltrators in the Federal Government intended to turn the country over to the Soviet Union by 1973.

"The timetable is being rigorously followed," he said.

The soft-spoken, intense Missourian declared that President Nixon and his three predecessors in the country's highest office had been "hand picked for the job by the international Communist conspiracy."

Last 'Free' Election

DePugh, who was once denounced by the John Birch Society as too extreme, said 1972 would be the last year "we'll have even a pretense of a free election."

He said former Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama, the American Independent party's Presidential candidate last year, was "not the answer" to the nation's needs, but he commended to Americans the Patriotic party, which he and other Minutemen founded July 4, 1966.

The 5-foot 11-inch Minuteman leader wore a green sports shirt and tan trousers. He apparently did not find it necessary to re-

sort to dog food and vitamin pills to survive, as he has advised his followers to do if worse comes to worst. He said his weight had risen to 210 pounds during his flight from the law.

DePugh was cautioned several times during the interview by his court-appointed lawyer, Jacob Carian, not to reveal details of his adventure.

DePugh said any well-trained Minuteman could outwit and elude the F.B.I. "forever" if necessary.

He said his capture would not affect preparations of Minutemen bands throughout

the country for the day of reckoning. Others, he said, have been trained to take over.

Peyson, 27, interjected: "We will never surrender."

Since joining the Minutemen, Peyson, a Mississippi native, has moved to tiny Norborne, Mo., site of the Biolab Corporation, a DePugh family concern that makes drugs for sale to veterinarians.

Since DePugh went underground, the business has been operated by Mrs. DePugh and their son Ralph, 23, eldest of six children.

DePugh said he and his aide had traveled almost constantly during the long flight, sometimes moving on when alerted by friends that capture might be imminent.

"The only difficulty was that we tried to do too much," he said. "We worked so hard for the organization that we disregarded our own safety."

Even so, he said, their capture was "a fluke."

"Wally and I just happened to be at that house at the wrong time," he said.

'Coming and Going'

He said that they never had stayed anywhere more than a few months and that even then they had been "coming and going."

"We used a wide variety of disguises while traveling," he said. "Different mustaches and hairpieces. Different kinds of clothing with different characteristics. Sometimes I had a full beard, sometimes a mustache."

He said they did not need to rely on Minutemen cells for food or hideouts as they moved about because "we had made extensive preparations."

"Our future survival may depend more on our knowledge of how to obtain fake identifi-

cation papers than on our ability to cook the roots of cattail plants," he wrote in a recent article distributed to Minutemen.

When captured DePugh and

Peyson were using the aliases of Ralph and Jim Cooper. The F.B.I. said they had identification papers with those names.

DePugh said the Federal charges against him were "political persecution and harassment."

A conviction in 1966 in Kansas City on Federal charges of possession and transportation of unregistered, illegally altered weapons and failure to pay taxes on them was reversed by the Federal Court of Appeals in St. Louis last year, but a retrial was ordered on one count of transporting a firearm in interstate commerce.

'Like Accusing Santa Claus

As for the alleged conspiracy to rob banks in Washington, DePugh said: "For me to be accused of robbing a bank is like accusing Santa Claus of robbing kids at Christmas."

"Perhaps our problems have been multiplied," he said of his capture, "but the year and a half of freedom from harassment was worth it."

He said his 10-year-old organization had grown in the time he spent underground, although the F.B.I. director, J. Edgar Hoover, said last year that there were fewer than 500 members and that few of them could be called upon for overt action.

DePugh said there were several thousand members.

"If this nation is to be saved from Communism," he said today, "the people must do the saving because our Government will not."

This frequently repeated admonition has led to numerous incidents across the country.

In 1966, 19 members were arrested in New York on charges of conspiring to burn down three pacifist and leftist camps in New York, Connecticut and New Jersey and the Brooklyn office of Herbert Aptheker, who was then a Marxist candidate for Congress. Tons of firearms and ammunition were found in the possession of those Minutemen.

A Fighter's Equipment

"Each member is expected to provide his own gun, ammunition and other combat gear," DePugh wrote in an issue of the publication On Target that came out after those arrests.

"These things are just the beginning of what an underground resistance fighter must have."

He said the Minutemen were stockpiling food, machinery to fabricate weapons, medical supplies and equipment for electronic surveillance.

He urged the Minutemen to "build up a second identity"

Disguise

ment. Most dealers will ask for your name but few will ask for identification.
 As the basic weapon for the Minuteman who is not a student of guns, he recommended a .22-caliber semiautomatic pistol.
 "It's true," he said, "that the 22 lacks the shock effect of a more powerful cartridge, but this is largely compensated for by the ease of putting a well-placed shot into heart or brain. When needed, a second well-aimed shot can be fired quicker from a .22 than from a more powerful weapon."
 "Try to buy your gin in such a way that it cannot be traced to you," he counseled. "If you live in a state or city that requires a permit to buy a gun, go to some other state that does not have such a require-"
 for use when needed.