

Redding Police 'Auxiliary'

REDDING — (UPI) — This Northern California city has a 13 man band of gun-toting, badge-carrying private citizens with police authority, but it's all news to city hall.

Police Chief George Vanderpool said he has given the group full police powers, but word of the force and the extent of its authority has come as a complete surprise to Mayor George K. Moty, the City Council and City Manager Robert W. Cowden.

NO UNIFORMS

"It smacks of old-western vigilantism," said one city official, who asked not to be named.

Members of the force, many of whom are small businessmen, ride on police patrols, carry guns and

badges, and have the power of arrest. But they do not wear uniforms.

The powers and gun-carrying authority are not limited to when they are in the company of regular officers.

Redding, a community of 17,000, is the seat of Shasta County and has a regular police force of 35 men.

"They've all had firearms training," Vanderpool said of the special force. "I wouldn't let anybody ride or carry a gun at all until they did have firearms training."

UNHAPPY

Vanderpool said he has issued badges and police identification cards to the men, and they ride with regular officers to "back them up."

But Cowden was displeased.

"I knew we had a left-handed auxiliary, but I thought it died a-borning. This is a surprise to me that they are carrying guns. This I was unaware of, I'm not happy with this situation. I'm going into this in detail."

He said he would investigate and report to the City Council.

POLICE POWERS

A police auxiliary group has been known to be in existence for a year or longer. But it was not known to have police powers. One of the men has belonged to the auxiliary group since 1949.

Police Capt. Harold Snow said the group in its present form has been developing "step by step" since Vanderpool became chief in 1966.