

21,211 Deserters, a Record, Arrested by FBI in Year

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The FBI said yesterday that it had arrested a record 21,211 U. S. military deserters and turned them over to authorities during Fiscal Year 1972.

During the same period, according to the FBI's annual report, the bureau located 2,550 persons sought for criminal violations of the draft laws.

Taken together, the figures mean that some two-thirds of the 36,287 fugitives the FBI says it picked up between July, 1971, and June, 1972, were wanted in connection with avoidance of military service.

Acknowledging that the statistics are related to dissent against American military involvement in Southeast Asia, an FBI official predicted that the bureau's concern in this area—as well as its continued surveillance of the domestic antiwar movement—would decline sharply “after the war is over.”

The report, an annual institution watched for shifts in FBI strategy and focus, covers the last 10 months of the reign of long-time director J. Edgar Hoover, who died last May 2.

It is packed with statistics—for example, 434,138 people had guided tours through FBI headquarters during the fiscal year, and 1,726,869 pieces of mail were “processed and filed” in the investigative files.

But except to state that women and more members of minority groups are now being recruited as agents, the report does not mention any other changes being made by Acting Director L. Patrick Gray III.

There is substantial detail, however, about the FBI's increasingly computerized fingerprint and information storage network.

During Fiscal 1972, there was a 35 per cent increase in the amount of records stored in the National Crime Information Center at FBI headquarters, which is connected to 97 regional “terminals” throughout the United States and Canada.

The NCIC system now stores more than 3.7 million records of wanted criminals, criminal histories, motor vehicles, stolen property, firearms, securities and other matters, according to the report.

“About 750 inquiries made of the system each day result in ‘hits,’ or positive responses,” it says.

The FBI received fewer fingerprints for its files in Fiscal 1972 than in 1971 (just over 6 million in the latest fiscal year). The report attributes this change to a decision by U.S. District Court Judge Gerhard A. Gesell here in 1971, limiting the bureau's processing of non-federal fingerprint cards.

At the end of the fiscal year, the FBI's missing persons program—“a beneficial and humanitarian service”—had 5,901 pending cases.

Eight of the annual report's 46 pages are devoted to the FBI's activities in domestic intelligence.

As part of the bureau's role in “coordination and dissemination of information pertaining to the internal security of the United States,” the report says, the FBI handled more than 2 million “name checks” during the period.

Under the heading “Revolutionary Activities,” it noted that 26 members of the Weatherman faction of Students for a Democratic Society are fugitives. The group “is the subject of intensive FBI investigation,” and its members are provided refuge by the “drug-oriented youth culture” at home and abroad, according to the report.

A full page of the domestic intelligence section is devoted to “Black Extremism,” singling out the Black Panther Party, the Republic of New Africa and the Nation of Islam as special objects of FBI attention.

As evidence of “foreign involvement in the black extremist movement,” the FBI report cites the Panthers' sponsorship of two trips to China and the Libyan govern-

ment's loan of almost \$3 million to the Nation of Islam for purchase of a Chicago mosque.

The report also identifies the National Peace Action Coalition, the Peoples Coalition for Peace and Justice and Vietnam Veterans Against the War as antiwar groups under investigation by the FBI.

One of the few surprises in the FBI report was the number of arrests of deserters and draft dodgers.

According to the bureau, 4,448 Selective Service law violators were at large at the end of the fiscal year. A Pentagon spokesman said there are still about 30,000 deserters at large.