

135 Are Arrested In Santa Cruz

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Santa Cruz

The largest mass arrests in the history of this coast-side community erupted yesterday after Vietnam war protesters blocked both the Highway 17 freeway and coast Highway 1.

"It was the largest mass arrest here ever," Santa Cruz police chief Geno Tini noted as he tallied up 135 separate arrests — most of them on charges of failing to disperse and of blocking

Most of the arrests — 100 students — were made after two echelons of protesters marched away from a noon rally at the U.S. Post Office and headed for the strategic intersections.

TRAFFIC

Each of the forces numbered 300 students — and each blocked traffic on the freeway and on Highway 1.

Before their intersection lock-in, the demonstrators assured Santa Cruz police captain Richard Overton

that they would carry out only a brief "symbolic" occupation of the intersection.

"They didn't hold true to their promise," he said later.

"We waited 15 minutes and moved in and made arrests."

OFFICERS

Santa Cruz police — reinforced by 48 riot-clad Tactical Squad officers from the Watsonville and San Jose Police Departments and the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department — moved in and started making the first of some 100 arrests at the blocked intersections.

The force of 150 lawmen herded the demonstrators some 12 blocks back to the Santa Cruz County Jail.

Here the angry crowd ballooned to nearly 1000.

Students hurled rocks, fruit, vegetables and beer cans at the helmeted police in front of the jail and made several attempts to surge inside to free their compatriots.

At least ten fires were set

in street waste and garbage cans near the jail.

The officers defending the jail counter-attacked, concentrating on the leaders of the mob, and made 35 more arrests — two of them for arson for the unlawful burning of trash in the streets.

The disruption in the downtown area was termed "the worst I've seen in 25 years as police chief" by Tini.

One girl was injured during the battle when she was hit by a rock a demonstrator threw at a Tac Squad officer.

TOPLESS

A topless demonstrator — with beautifully tanned breasts — was placed under citizen's arrest by a Santa Cruz woman incensed by her bare chest.

"It wasn't our arrest," Tini noted.

Last May, during protests after the Laos incursion, 65 persons were arrested, Tini said.