

# Security Tight in Capital After Blast in Pentagon

NYTimes

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Special to The New York Times MAY 20 1972

WASHINGTON, May 19—Federal investigators searched for clues today in the rubble of a Pentagon rest room that was destroyed by an explosion early this morning, touching off tightened security procedures across Washington.

The explosion blasted a two-foot hole through the floor, shattered plumbing, caused the ceiling to cave in, knocked a 30-foot section of a wall into a hallway, and broke windows in at least three adjacent offices. However, no one was

injured.

The blast came only six hours before stringent security measures were put into force in the Pentagon in preparation for a weekend of antiwar demonstrations. The demonstrators plan to disrupt traffic going to the Pentagon on Monday.

Jerry Gordon of the National Peace Action Coalition, a sponsor of the weekend protest actions, said his group had no connection with or knowledge of the bombing.

In calls to The New York Times and newspapers here, persons saying they represented the Weatherman faction, a radical protest organization, said the group set the bomb. One of these calls was made to The New York Post at 1:50 A.M., six minutes after the explosion and well before it had come to the attention of the news media generally.

## No F.B.I. Speculation

Officials of the Federal Bureau of Investigation refused to speculate on who may have carried out the bombing.

The callers said the office of the Secretary of the Air Force had been bombed, but the blast that shattered the women's room was in a separate corridor of the building, a distance of one and one-half or two city blocks from the office of Air Force Secretary Robert C. Seamans Jr.

The explosion underscored the vulnerability of the mam-

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moth office building across the Potomac in Arlington, Va., the headquarters of the American military establishment.

Nevertheless, officials said the Pentagon would stay open.

"The building will be open and the public's national security business will be conducted as usual," said Jerry W. Friedheim, the Pentagon spokesman, at a news briefing.

However, the building's protective force, which consists of about 65 guards from the General Services Administration on each shift, again began inspecting packages carried into the building by visitors.

## In Other Buildings, Too

The same procedure, which had been in force for a year before it was abandoned last January because it appeared to be unnecessary, was also reinstated by the G.S.A. in other Government buildings here.

A spokesman for the agency said that persons without Government identification entering a building with a package would be stopped for inspection of the package. But no personal searches will be conducted, he said.

"The American public wants its freedom and you have to strike a happy medium between what they will tolerate and what we deem necessary," said the spokesman, Richard Q. Vauter.

According to officials at the Department of Defense, the blast occurred at 12:59 A.M. Although several hundred persons were in the building, it was a time when it is occupied by the fewest workers.

Mr. Friedheim said there are about 27,500 employees in the Pentagon, evenly divided between civilian and military. About 2,500 of these are G.S.A. employees, and the others work for the various military services.

## Section Sealed Off

Shortly after the explosion, the section where it took place—at the junction of the fourth-floor E-ring (the outer corridor) and a hallway called corridor 10—was sealed off.

Bomb and fingerprint specialists from the F.B.I. searched for clues in the rubble.

Officials would not say what kind of device had caused the explosion, where precisely it had been planted, or any other findings they might have made. However, it did not appear that an incendiary device, or fire bomb, was involved.



The rest room itself is one of 280 similar ones in the Pentagon, which is believed to be the world's largest office building.

Like most of the others, the rest room was open to the public—that is, to anyone who entered the building — from 7 A.M. to 6 P.M. on weekdays. Unlike some other buildings in the city, such as the Department of State, no special clearance is needed to enter.

There are some sections of the Pentagon, however, such as working areas of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the National Military Command Center, or "war room," where access is restricted to a limited number of persons.

#### Laird in Europe

Other areas, such as the outer-corridor offices of Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird, are usually easy to reach. Mr. Laird has been in Europe this week conferring with ministers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Among those closest to the blast at the time were 10 persons working in the Air Force message center, about 300 feet down the corridor.

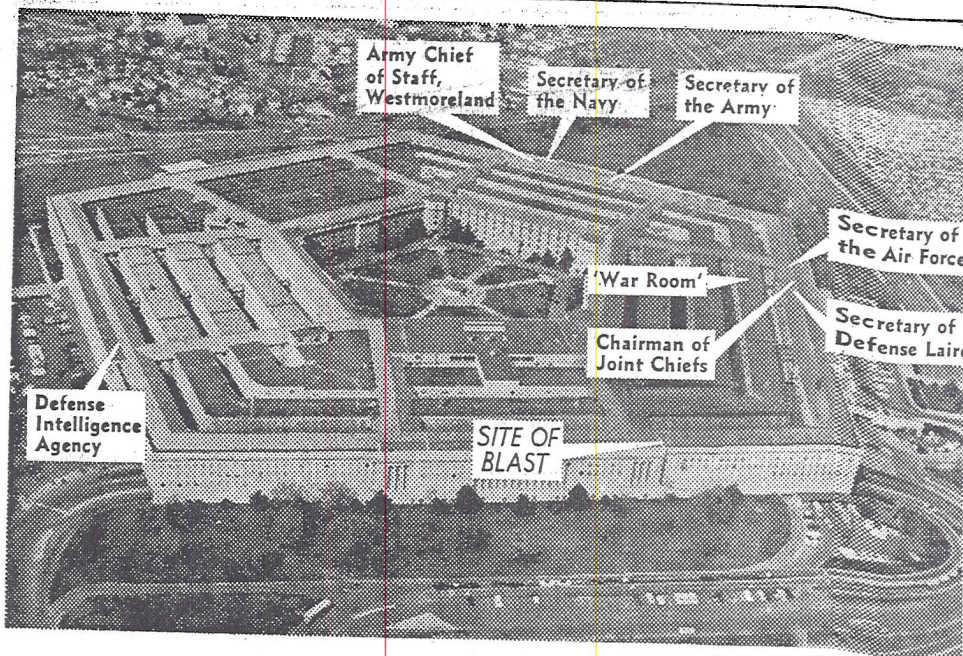
One of them, M. Sgt. Jack Pickrell, said he could smell explosive powder shortly after the blast. The force of the explosion shook the building, according to others working on the fourth floor at the time.

"As soon as it went off, people in the message center rushed in to the hall and saw what looked like a big fog bank coming down the corridor," said Capt. William F. Kelly, who was also in the message center.

#### Water on Concourse

The force of the blast and water from shattered pipes caused considerable damage to the nearby area. Brig. Gen. Daniel James of the Air Force a Pentagon spokesman, said 18 persons employed on the fourth floor were unable to work "in their assigned areas" today because of the damage.

Water also caused some damage in the Pentagon concourse, which is occupied by store con-



The Pentagon, believed to be the world's largest office building, is open to the public. Areas of "War Room" or Joint Chiefs of Staff are restricted, but others are usually not. The New York Times / May 20, 1972

## Pentagon Rubble Is Searched for Clues

cessions, a bank, a post office station and other facilities. Sources said no over-all estimate of financial damage would be available until Monday. The losses seemed likely to run into the tens of thousands of dollars, however.

The explosion appeared to be the first in the history of the Pentagon, which was built during World War II.

The last major bombing of a Government building here was on March 1, 1971, when part of the original Senate wing of the capitol was torn by a blast in a men's room that caused \$300,000 damage.

Leslie Bacon, an antiwar activist, was indicted last March by a Federal grand jury in Seattle on charges of perjury in connection with the bombing. She was accused of having lied when she said she was not inside the building hours before the explosion. However, no one has been charged with the bombing.