

# BOMB DISMANTLED AT FRENCH AGENCY

Police at Fifth Ave. Office Had a 2-Minute Margin

By MARTIN ARNOLD

Two bomb squad detectives dismantled a live bomb hanging on the door of the French Government Tourist Office in Rockefeller Center yesterday morning, two minutes before it was set to go off.

Since April 22, five other tourist and diplomatic offices in the city have been bombed, and a special squad—the first since the Mad Bomber episode in the 1950's—has been set up by the police to investigate the bombings.

One theory is that anti-Castro Cubans are involved in the bombings. All the missions and tourist offices belong to countries that trade with Havana.

The device at the French tourist office at 610 Fifth Avenue had the explosive power of four sticks of dynamite, the police said. Four men were seen in the vicinity of the office shortly before the bomb was discovered at 2:07 A.M.

The bomb consisted of a grayish-off-white, putty-like mass of plastic explosive—commonly used by soldiers and terrorists—attached to a dynamite detonating cap, a 1.5-volt dry cell battery and an inexpensive clock.

The dynamite cap was set to the hands of the clock, and when shortly after 3 A.M. Detective Andrew T. Sweeney of the bomb squad peered into the paper bag in which the bomb was hanging, he realized

Continued on Page 25, Column 3

Continued From Page 1, Col. 1

it would go off within two minutes.

"Andy looked in and saw the clock and said: 'Jimmy, we got two minutes. Cut it and cut it fast.' And I did," said Detective James G. Dooley. Detective Dooley, who is 60 years old, has been a member of the bomb squad for 33 years and is scheduled to retire next month.

Detective Sweeney lifted the wires of the bomb out of the bag and held them apart while Detective Dooley snipped the main one.

"There was no time to discuss who would do what. If it had gone off, we'd have both been dead," Detective Sweeney said.

To "cut it" means to cut the wire that defuses the bomb. If the wrong wire is cut first, the bomb, or the "infernal device" as it is called by the bomb squad, will probably explode.

"The only one who really knows what's in a bomb is the fellow who made it," said Detective Sweeney, who at 45 has been on the bomb squad 15 years and has won four police citations for dismantling bombs. "I'm still shaky," he said.

### Expert's Hand Apparent

The bomb was made by someone who is an expert, the bomb squad said.

Since the bombings started, the Police Department has been guarding selected foreign consulates and tourist offices on a round-the-clock basis.

Yesterday morning Patrolman James Mahoney of the 18th Precinct was guarding the French office on the northwest corner of 49th Street and Fifth Avenue, one block south of St. Patrick's Cathedral.

At 2:07 A.M., the police said, Patrolman Mahoney was making his routine check-in with the police call box at the southwest corner of the block when he looked up and saw four men walking east on 49th Street toward Fifth Avenue.

Two of the men continued on 49th Street and two others walked in front of the French office. Moments later Patrolman Mahoney spotted the paper shopping bag hanging on the agency's door.

The policeman ran across the street, looked in the bag and saw the bomb and turned in the alarm to the emergency squad. The squad arrived with "Big Bertha" — the bomb disposal truck — and verified that there was a bomb in the bag.

The emergency squad then summoned the bomb squad and set about clearing and sealing off the streets, a relatively easy chore at that time in the morning.

Shortly before 3 A.M. Detectives Sweeney and Dooley arrived in the bomb squad station wagon from the Police Academy at 235 East 20th Street, where the squad has its quarters.

"We didn't have time to go

through any of the procedures," Detective Sweeney said later. "We just had to defuse it then and there."

Detective Dooley said: "You just think to yourself you'd like to go home and see your wife once again."

If time allows, the standard procedure is to take the bomb and immerse it in oil, which quickly seeps into the timing

device and inactivates the bomb. This procedure was developed after a bomb killed two detectives at the British Pavilion at the World's Fair on July 4, 1940—the last time a bomb cost the lives of any bomb squad personnel.

The hunt for the bombers is continuing, but so far there have been few clues, the police said. There is no way to trace either the plastic explosive or the dynamite caps, the bomb squad said.

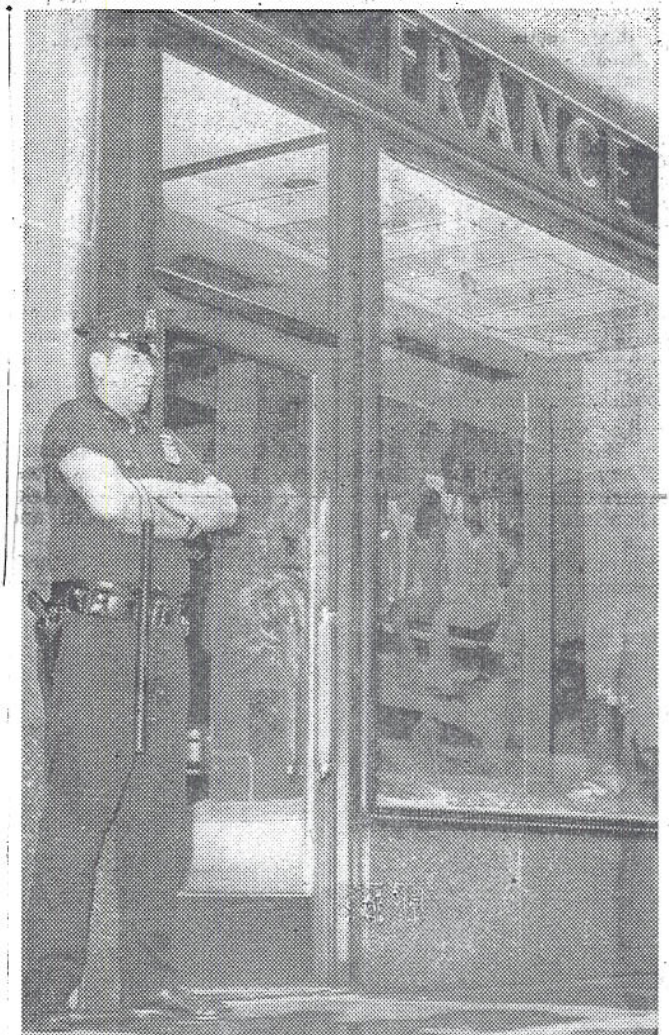
It is believed by the police

that most, if not all, the plastic explosive has found its way into illegal channels from military bases.

The outbreak of bombings in the city began April 22, when small bombs went off two hours apart outside the Mexican Consulate on 41st Street and the Spanish National Tourist Office on Fifth Avenue, which was struck twice. Canadian, Japanese and Yugoslav offices also have been hit.

Yesterday's bomb at the French office was discovered several hours after the end of Bastille Day, the anniversary of the French revolution of 1789.

The man who was called the Mad Bomber was George P. Metesky, who between Nov. 18, 1940, and his arrest on Jan. 21, 1957, exploded or hid 47 bombs around the city. Metesky is now in the Matteawan State Hospital for the Criminally Inane at Beacon, N.Y.



United Press International  
Policeman stands guard at the French Government Tourist Office in Rockefeller Center, where bomb was deactivated.