

2 FBI Men

JUN 27 1975

Slain on Reservation

Pine Ridge, S.D.

Two FBI agents were shot and killed yesterday as they attempted to serve arrest warrants at a house on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation.

One of those in the cabin was also reported to have been killed in a gun battle that continued into the night.

The site of the shooting is about 15 miles west of Wounded Knee, the community armed Indians seized and held for 71 days in 1973.

An FBI spokesman in Washington said the agents were gunned down as they were trying to serve warrants at a house five miles southeast of the reservation community of Oglala.

The man slain in the cabin was identified as Little Joe Killright, an Oglala Sioux and resident of the reservation town of Porcupine.

The dead agents were identified by the FBI in Washington as Jack R. Coler, 28, assigned to the Denver office; and Ronald A. Williams, 28, assigned to the Rapid City, S.D., office.

Coler, originally from Long Beach; Calif., is survived by his wife and two children, 2 and 4 years old, all of Colorado Springs. Williams is originally from Southern California, the FBI said.

FBI agents called in from surrounding areas and Indian police from the reservation surrounded the house and sporadic firing continued.

About seven hours after the shooting began at noon, the FBI reported that the occupants of the house had escaped outside and a gun battle was continuing in the rolling hills and ravines of the sprawling reservation.

Toby Moran, a spokesman for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, reported that an FBI agent told him that one of the persons being sought had been killed. He said they were still pursuing the rest as darkness spread over the reservation and said he had no indication how many persons that was.

What happened and who was doing the shooting remained unclear late yesterday as the FBI and local officials set up roadblocks.

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They were reticent about details.

Much of the information about the events came from the FBI and Justice Department officials in Washington, more than 2000 miles away.

However, in a telephone call to the Associated Press, Senator James Abourezk (Dem-S.D.) said the FBI told him that on Wednesday, it had identified five Indians who had allegedly kidnaped a white man and his son who lived on the reservation.

Abourezk said the FBI told him yesterday's trouble started when the agents went to the home of one of the five in an attempt to arrest him. He said the FBI said there appeared to be bunkers around the house but it was unclear whether they were man-made or natural bunkers.

The area is west of Wounded Knee, which armed members of the American Indian Movement seized and held before negotiating a settlement with federal authorities. There have been sporadic protests area since then.

Associated Press