

Hunt for FBI killers widens at Pine Ridge

United Press International

OLGALA, S.D. — FBI agents yesterday spread their search for the ambush killers of two of their men to lands surrounding the Pine Ridge Indian reservation.

A spokesman said the FBI had "no indication" whether the Indians sought were on the reservation or off it.

With 25 additional men expected on the scene today, about 175 agents will be pressing the search with the new arrivals.

An FBI spokesman said they were looking for maybe 16 men who Thursday shot and killed agents Jack Coler, 27, and Ronald Williams, 27, both of Los Angeles, when they drove up in front of a bunker-protected cement block home here. They were attempting to serve a warrant, charging kidnaping and assault with a dangerous weapon, on Jimmy Theodore Eagle, 20.

An Indian, Joe Roberts, was killed the same day, although probably not at that time, the FBI said yesterday.

When officers entered the house after the occupants had fled, they found several weapons left behind, including semi-automatic rifles, ammunition and "explosive devices," an FBI source said.

Sources close to Indians living on the reservation said the killers are undoubtedly "long gone" from the area and probably had friends who helped them make their getaway.

These sources believe the killing was planned, and the means of escape had been organized.

One FBI agent yesterday said the fugitives might not be in the state, and a Bureau of Indian Affairs official expressed the same opinion.

However, with plane and helicopter aiding as needed, the surrounding area was being searched as thoroughly as possible by FBI agents.

At a morning briefing, agents said there were two main exchanges of gunfire Thursday.

The first occurred when Coler and Williams drove up to the house to serve the warrants.

They were shot repeatedly and stripped of weapons and identification. Help was summoned by radio by a third agent following them in another car.

After that, it was disclosed, a BIA agent unsuccessfully tried to talk the Indians into a truce. When other officers arrived, shooting began again and Roberts was believed to have been slain at that time. The FBI said he had a rifle, a pistol, and several boxes of ammunition beside him when he was found.