

North Omaha Target

Raid Planned, Then Canceled

Federal agents planned last month to search the Omaha headquarters of the militant National Committee to Combat Fascism on a tip that dynamite and machine guns were being stocked there, it was learned Friday.

The search was called off at the last minute.

One source told The World-Herald that after a warrant authorizing the search was issued here and plans for a visit to the headquarters were completed, the Justice Department in Washington gave a "go-ahead" signal.

Then, a short time later, a call was received canceling the raid, this source said.

Can't Discuss Matter

U.S. Dist. Atty. Richard A. Dier was asked why the raid was canceled.

"I am sorry," he said, "but I cannot discuss the matter."

Thereafter, The World-Herald Washington Bureau contacted the Justice Department. A spokesman there said the search was called off when the Justice Department asked that the information gathered in support of a search warrant be sent to Washington. The spokesman said there was a feeling in the Justice Department that the search warrant was based on "questionable information."

The Justice spokesman quoted Dier as fearing that the delay would expose the plan and provide time for the removal of any weapons.

Boxes of Machine Guns

From documents on file in U.S. District Court, The World-Herald has learned that an agent of the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Division of the Treasury Department was told that the NCCF headquarters at 3508 North Twenty-fourth Street contained 10 boxes of machine guns.

The agent, Thomas J. Sledge, said in his application for a search warrant that the witness, at his request, drew pictures of the guns "and quite accurately pictured a machine gun" which Sledge said he recognized as being "of Russian manufacture."

Sledge is an older brother of Omaha Patrolman James Sledge who was among those injured last Monday when an explosion in an empty house at 2867 Ohio Street killed Patrolman Larry D. Minard. Seven officers in all were injured in that blast.

Sledge said that the witness, an adolescent, told him that there also was dynamite in the house, "15, more or less, bundles of 12 sticks in a bundle wrapped with cord or wire."

The witness said the sticks were about 12 inches long, an inch in diameter and brown, Sledge said in his affidavit.

The Treasury agent said the witness claimed to have seen several men making a bomb out of the dynamite sticks, and gave details of the way it was put together.

In the court document, Thomas Sledge also quoted the witness as having detailed knowledge of a bombing July 2 at the Component Concepts Corp., 3815 North Twenty-fourth Street.

Sledge said that in an effort to substantiate what the witness told him, he checked other sources. He said that among other things he checked with a man who claimed to have sold machine guns to NCCF members.

On July 20, Sledge filed his application for a search warrant. The same day a search warrant was signed by Federal District Court Clerk Richard Peck, directing Sledge and U.S. Marshal Lloyd Grimm to lead a search of the NCCF house and seize any illegal contraband.

The World-Herald has learned that the search was to be made early the next morning, July 21. Other law enforcement officers were alerted.

Then the Justice Department asked to see Sledge's information and the plan was dropped.

A spokesman for the Treasury Department in Washington also was asked to comment. He said comment would have to come from the local district attorney but added: "It is not unusual for search warrants to go unserved. Circumstances can change."

Poindexter Says Searchers Welcome

"All they have to do is come to our door with a legitimate search warrant. We'll let them in," Ed Poindexter, chairman of the local NCCF headquarters, said Friday.

Asked about any cache of machine guns or dynamite, Poindexter laughed and said, "My comment is that we don't have anything to hide . . . and they don't have to raid us."

"Actually, if they believe everything they hear, we'd have an entire National Guard Armory stuck up here," Poindexter said. "We'll be glad to let them search all they want."

"We're not going to have any more Fred Hamptons or Mark Clarks like in Chicago last December. They shoot us, we're definitely going to shoot back. We'll be throwing everything at them they throw at us in spite of our deaths, but we have nothing to hide."