3 bombs rock Danbury

20 hurt as police station, mall, bank blasted in robbery

DANBURY — At least three thunderous explosions in downtown Danbury shortly before 10:45 a.m. today rocked the city police station and the Union Savings Bank on Main Street, and the Danbury Mall, apparently injuring many people.

The Danbury police station's interior was demolished by the first blast.

Moments later, a second blast blew out all windows of the Union Savings Bank, about three blocks away.

Police officials said that this was definitely an armed robbery of the Union Savings Bank. They said $75,000 was taken by men armed with automatic weapons. The bomb explosion at the bank followed the hold up, police said.

The bombs were apparently set off to cover up a hold up.

A third explosion occurred in a car at the Danbury Mall, off Kennedy Avenue, about three blocks from the bank.

The series of explosions recalled incidents in Indianapolis two years ago when explosions were touched off in the course of the holdup of a bank.

Several police officers were removed by ambulance to Danbury Hospital and several persons inside and outside of the bank also were rushed to the hospital with cuts, mostly from flying glass.

Two white males drove up to the police station in a white station wagon and threw a bomb into the building, according to first reports.

And at the bank, the Rev. Clare Ingram, minister of education of the First Congregational Church, said he saw a man with something that looked like a machine gun was inside as he entered and several people lying on the floor. The gunman ordered Mr. Ingram to get down on the floor. Moments later, there was an explosion.

Water was flowing out of the police station, and all windows were blown out. One witness said, "I don't see how anybody inside that building could have survived." It was not immediately known whether the second floor of police headquarters, used as a Head Start office and for other purposes, was damaged, or anyone there was hurt.

Gary Rondo of Bethel said he was driving by the bank when there was a "terrific blast." He said, "my car bounced in the air, and all of a sudden I was covered with flying glass."

Police Capt. Charles P. Chelso said the explosion appeared to come from the first floor area of police headquarters. "We felt like we went up three feet off the floor when it happened," he said. Several seconds later, Chelso found Sgt. Peter Wojnilko unconscious. Chelso himself suffered cuts and bruises.

Two others, Sgts. Thomas Keating and Nelson Macedo, also were in the office at the time.

Mrs. Catherine Troccola, secretary to Police Chief William Tobin, reportedly was injured, but the extent of her injuries, nor those of the two sergeants, was immediately known.

A Danbury Hospital estimated that about 20 persons were injured, none critically.

Moments after the explosions, thousands of persons gathered out-

Continued on Page 2

The News-Times
Danbury, Conn. 06810, Friday, February 13, 1970
Vol. 87 No. 38 10c Daily at Newsstand

Witnesses tell about explosions

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Atty. Norman Buzaid, Democratic Town Committee chairman, was in his office upstairs in the bank building when Probate Judge Jules Bielizna came in and shouted that the bank was being held up.

Buzaid told his secretary to call the police department. She tried but the line was busy.

As they attempted to make another call, there was the explosion, first of several to rock the downtown area around 10:40 a.m.

"There was a big boom" Buzaid said, adding that it shook the building. "All the pictures on my office wall fell to the floor.

City Patrolman Gary DeMunnik was running down West Street toward Main Street and police headquarters. He was part way across West Street when he heard the explosion.

"I looked down Main Street and saw smoke and glass flying across the street from the bank," he said.

He and another patrolman ran down Main Street, one going to the front and the other to the rear of the Union Savings Bank.

They got quick descriptions of the holdupmen from people who had been in the bank at the time. Some said the getaway car had New York license plates.

Judge Bielizna, upstairs in the "closing room" of the bank, had called down to Gilbert Benson, vice president

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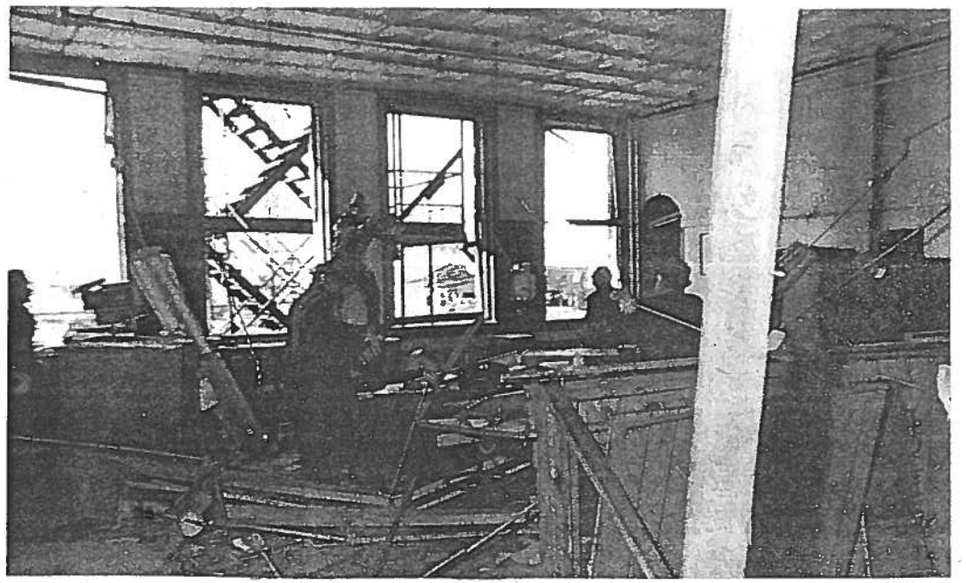

Police headquarters debris

Rescue workers probe through the wreckage of what was formerly the police desk room after an explosion ripped through the building this morning.

3 bombs rock Danbury

Continued from Page 1

side downtown buildings, obviously afraid that their building might be next.

Apparently everyone at the bank escaped injury because the two holdup men herded them into a back room before the bomb went off. The two made off with an undetermined amount of money.

At the Grandway entrance to the Danbury Mall, on the Rose Street side, an explosion blasted a white Chrysler parked about 150 feet away. Initial reports were that no one was injured either inside or outside the store.

The force of the blast shattered windows in the four entry and exit doors as well as a window on an upper floor. A Plymouth station wagon parked next to the exploding vehicle was badly damaged and tires on several other cars were blown by the force of the blast. Wreckage was strewn for hundreds of feet around the demolished auto.

Fire Marshal Alton Spencer said an initial inspection indicated the explosive device was inside the car. He also said that some witnesses saw an auto speeding away from the scene but that he had no knowledge whether it might have been connected with the explosion.

St. Peter's School, a block from the police station, was evacuated as a precautionary measure and the children were sent home.

An hour after the first explosion, Peter Winter, emergency operations officer of the Civil Defense organization, said:

"The situation has been stabilized. All the injured have been taken to the hospital. We have brought in the state police for traffic control, Civil Defense police and constables, and many volunteers for surrounding towns to assist us in the emergency situation.

"We have set up patrols for the security of the entire city. The emergency operations center of the City of Danbury is completely operable. All departments of the city government are functioning, including the police and fire departments."

And Daniel Penyak, a fireman, removed a smoking bomb from a wastebasket at the Crosby Street Extension end of the Danbury Mall.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation office in New Haven reported that it was sending men to Danbury to assist in the investigation. State Troopers from Ridgefield barracks were called in and so were all off-duty policemen and firemen and civil defense personnel. Mayor Gino Arconti requested police to block off the main arteries into the city.

Telephoned bomb threats, forced the evaluation of St. Joseph's Parochial [illegible] on Route 7 in Brookfield. The caller to St. Joseph's, told Mrs. Edward Hallabeck Sr. "Get the kids out in a hurry." They were, and boarded buses for home.

The city's police were being directed from the War Memorial Building within a half-hour of the first bombing.

A greater disaster at the police department apparently was avoided when firemen formed a human chain to remove ammunition.

The bombing occurred ironically on a black letter day for superstitious people — Friday the 13th. There will be two more Friday the 13ths this year.

Injured in today's blasts

DANBURY — Following is a complete list of those injured in the three bomb blasts which rocked downtown Danbury about 10:40 a.m.

Victor Gracer of 436 Woodmond Ave., Bridgeport, cuts of right leg and ears.

Lulu Stone, 385 Main Street, injured at Union Savings, treated and discharged.

Raymond Stone, 385 Main Street, injured at Union Savings, treated and discharged.

Margaret Morgan, 5 West Redding Road, treated and discharged.

Ptlm. Jerry Rockwell of 5 McDermott Street, treated and discharged.

Capt. Walter Risso of 16 Virginia Avenue, treated and discharged.

Mrs. Frances Abbott of 12 Berkshire Dr., treated and discharged.

Police Capt. Charles Chelso, 10 Tomlinson Ave. treated and discharged.

Sergeant John Esposito, 23 Locust Ave. right leg injured.

Sergeant Peter Wojnilko, 36 Oak Ridge Gate.

Sergeant John McGarry, 14 Johnson Dr. (hit in head), discharged.

Leonard Wilkes, Southview Avenue.

Lucy Roff, 16 Town Hill Ave. discharged.

Gyda Scherer, 33 Fairfield Dr., Brewster, discharged.

Rose Guarino, 16 Wood St.

Ethel Faust, 24 Prospect St., Ridgefield.

Beatrice Jacobs, Danbury, told to return for x-rays.

Marge Fogarty, 14 Linron Dr., discharged.

Rocco Grosse, 102 Rose Hill Ave., cut in face at bank, also dizziness.

Katherine Troccola, Police Department employe, 11 Summer St., injuries not available.

Sgt. Bart Dunn, 2 Coal Pit Hill, injuries not available.

Sgt. John Esposito, with the Police meter division, 23 Locust Ave., injuries not available.

James Anderson, no address or injuries immediately available.

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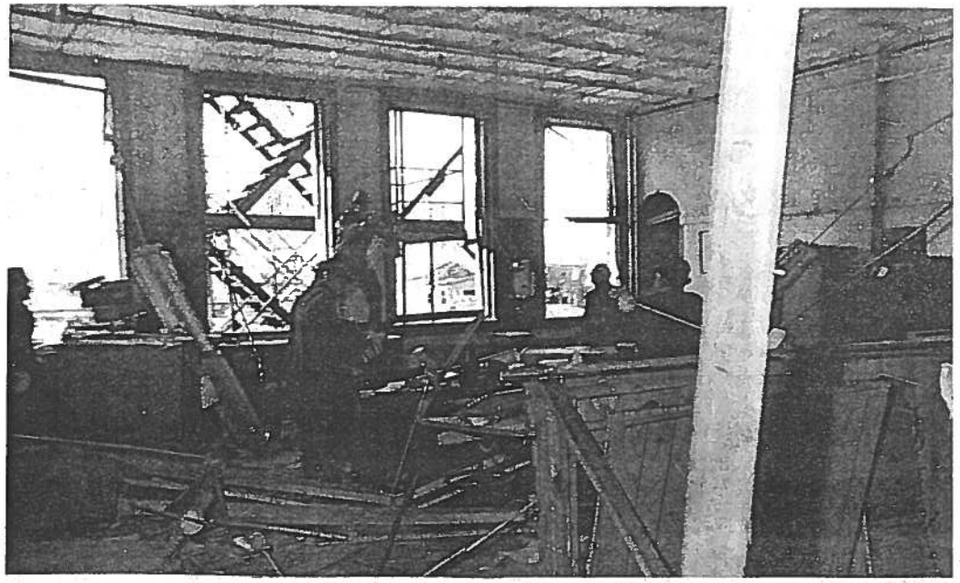

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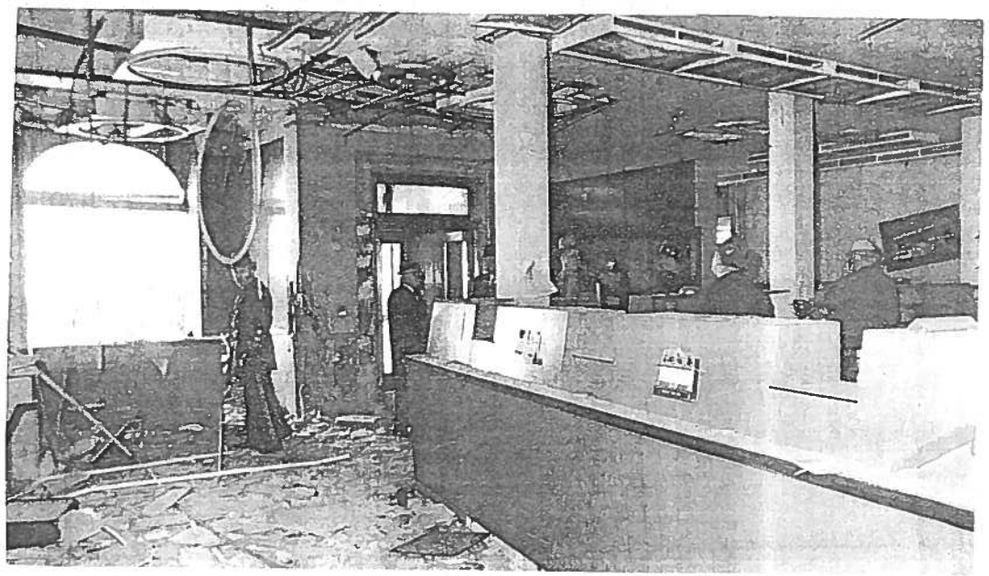

Bank explosion aftermath

State police officials, in front of the Main Street window of the Union Savings Bank, inspect the damage caused by an explosion which followed a holdup at the bank. (News-Times photos)

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DNT

Patients wait in lobby

Hospital wondered: How many more?

DANBURY — Controlled confusion was the best way to describe what went on at Danbury Hospital as the victims of yesterday's bombings came in for treatment.

Some of the injured were in the emergency room being treated but others walked around the lobby, waiting to be treated or waiting for a ride home.

Hospital officials were obviously concerned over the effect of the bombings. They constantly asked if any more explosions had occurred, how many might be hurt and how many were on their way to the hospital.

The reason was an ominous thing called "Plan D."

That is Danbury Hospital's plan for a full-scale disaster. Officials were worried that the plan might have to be used. As it turned out, Plan D was kept on the shelf.

Plan D is a plan for all employees of the hospital. All nurses are called in and all doctors report to the emergency room. The plan outlines every employe's position and duties in case of a disaster.

Capt. Walter Risso stood at the emergency room desk several minutes after he arrived. He was covered with dirt from the blast. He appeared dazed but was able to tell what happened.

Risso said he was standing at the rear counter in the main booking room at police headquarters when — boom! He didn't know where the explosive was nor what happened immediately afterwards.

The room where the bomb went off doesn't exist anymore.

Two secretaries, Helen Jacobs and Beatrice Violet, were in that room with Victor Gracer, a civilian talking with Sgt. Bart Dunn when the blast hit.

Capt. Charles Chelso was down the hall when the explosion occurred. He was interviewed while being examined by a doctor. He was covered with cuts from flying glass. He didn't know what happened either.

"The floor came up, the ceiling came down and the door casings came off" is the way custodian Leonard Wilkes described it. He was on the second floor talking with Mrs. Francis Abbott.

Mrs. Abbott, near tears as she waited her turn to be treated, said:

"Everything in the corridor was completely black. I heard the custodian (Wilkes) yell, 'Let's get out of here!' I said, 'How do I get out? Where do I go'?"

Mrs. Jacobs was picking glass out of her hair when interviewed. A light fixture had struck her in the head. She, like the others, could say nothing definite.

Patients still waiting to be treated wore big identification tags on their wrists. Nurses asked questions. When one officer was asked, "Your birthday?" his mind went blank. He couldn't think. Maybe he just didn't want to.

While the hospital officials said no one appeared gravely injured, some were admitted.

2/13/70

Bomb blasts hit downtown Danbury

Car Destroyed

Firemen spray down what remains of a car at the Danbury Mall parking lot which was destroyed by one of the three bomb blasts that shook Danbury this morning. The other two explosions were at the police station and the Union Savings Bank. (News-Times –Wichmann)

Littered hallway

Workers survey the rubble and the damage in the first floor corridor at police headquarters which was hit by an explosion this morning.

Witnesses describe it

Continued from Page 1

of the bank, to get some checks for the closing.

While he was talking to Benson by phone, Benson told him, the bank was being robbed. "Someone just said get down on the floor," he told Bielizna.

Bielizna told him to call the state police, hung up and himself called state police.

Atty. Ronald George was in the closing room with Judge Bielizna. When he heard the bank was being robbed, he walked down the flight of stairs and stood on the steps on the first floor.

As he was standing there, he said "two men in their 20's ran by and up the alley between Union Savings and City Trust Co. banks. Both men, he said, were white. One of them, he said, had an automatic pistol in his hand.

Seconds later, there was "a terrific explosion that practically knocked me off my feet," George said. Seconds after that, he added, two policemen ran up and he directed them up the alleyway. He walked into the bank and said:

"The inside was a shambles." But he said he did not see anyone, just one man who appeared to be unhurt and a bank employe standing behind one of the counters.

The explosion apparently occurred right in the front of the bank. It appears as if they dropped an explosive device near the front window as they ran out.

It completely blew out the front window and frame and shattered all other windows on the first floor.

Mrs. Herma Skoglund, employed in the newsroom of the News-Times was just turning the corner from New into Elm streets when one of the blasts occurred at the Danbury Mall parking lot.

"I saw, what I assumed was part of the roof near the Rose Street side, go up into the air. There was a lot of dark paper, like tarpaper, and some white paper flying in the air.

"First there was black smoke, then yellowish smoke."

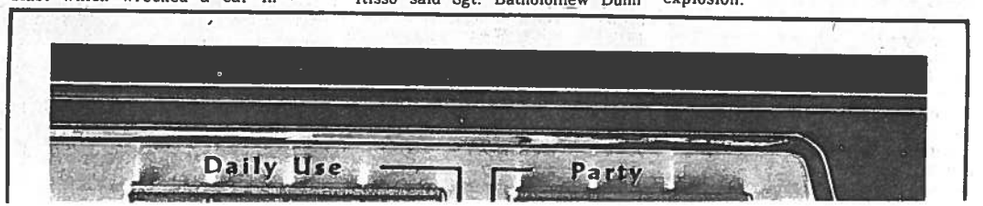
It was learned later that this was a blast which wrecked a car in the parking lot.

Danbury Police Capt. Walter Risso, his clothes covered with layers of dirt, said he was standing at a counter at the rear of the main police office when the explosion occurred.

"We had no warning at all," he said.

Risso said Sgt. Batholomew Dunn was in the office with him at the time, as were two secretaries, Helen Jacobs and Beatrice Violet.

Risso also said Lt. Leo Gantert was apparently in the building, although he was not seen immediately prior to the explosion.



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Both of bombed buildings once Danbury High School

1/16/70

DANBURY — Both buildings bombed by the bank robbers last Friday had formerly served as Danbury's high school.

The original high school was located on the third floor of the Union Savings Bank building (then known as the Union Bank building).

As a matter of ract, former Bank President Ernest Bailey used to say he "never got out of the building."

He graduated from high school upstairs and went to work for the bank downstairs.

That was about the turn of the century.

About 1903, the high school facilities were moved to the Main Street School (the police headquarters building bombed out Friday).

The high school remained there until about 1927 when a new high school was built on White Street. The Main Street School then became a sort of junior high, housing 7th and 8th grades until a junior high was built on Hospital Avenue.

FEB. 16, 1970

Some reactions to violence

By MAC OVERMYER
and GRAHAM ROSS

DANBURY — What happened in downtown Danbury yesterday can be summed up in a few words — violent crime and miraculous that no one died.

The following are some reactions obtained by News-Times staffers from eyewitnesses at the bombings at the police station, the Union Savings Bank and the Danbury Mall parking lot:

'Floor blew up'

Mrs. Frances C. Abbott, chief examiner, civil service commission, of 12 Berkshire Dr., was in the police station on the second floor when the explosion occurred.

"I remember looking over at the coffee pot, — I had made coffee the night before — and suddenly the floor blew up. It seemed to raise right up under my feet. I fell to the ground — I don't know why — and I heard Lenny yelling 'Let's get out of here! This way! This way!'

"I got to the door of my office and everything was blackness. I headed to the stairwell but the floor had caved in. I went right through the floor with one leg. I yelled 'Help me out! I can't get out!' I could here people saying 'What happened?'

"Finally I was able to get my leg out from the floor and get to the stairway. I must have slid half way down the stairway. They I remember someone carrying me out the door.

"It seemed to me that the force of the explosion was directed to the Boughton Street side of the station. Just before I ran out of my office I glanced back at my copying machine. It had blown completely apart."

Across the street

Harry Sturdevant, owner of Sturdevant's Photo Shop, 223 Main Street, across the street from the Union Savings Bank, believes he was the first one to enter the bank following the blast. His brother Charles is president of the bank.

"When I heard the explosion, I ran across the street to the bank. Naturally I was concerned about my brother. I looked in the (blasted out) windows and couldn't see anything, so I went in followed by one or two other people. Everybody was just so shaken up I couldn't get any information out of them. I ran back to where my brother's office is but he was in the coffee room. When I got to him I asked him what had happened. He said, 'Frankly, I don't know.'

"I was probably in the bank for four or five minutes. I had no more come back out the door when I heard the explosion from the Mall."

From inside

Mrs. Jean Rittenhouse, 27 Meadowbrook Vista, was in the police station at the time of the explosion. She wrote this account of the blast — as it affected a single room to the right rear corner of the building that houses the Library Processing Center.

"The coordinator of the center, Miss Jean Tucholski, had just finished a telephone conversation. The cataloger, Mrs. Majorie Doolan, had just returned to her desk after selecting several books from the shelves. Mrs. Margaret Morgan, who was busy supervising additional help had returned to her desk. Mrs. Rita Tichey and Mrs. Milfred Rowland were working near a large window on books that were on the table in front of them and Mrs. Adele Erichsen was typing. I was inserting cards into my typewriter and noted that the clock above my head allowed me an hour before 11:30 lunch.

"Suddenly, the whole frame of the building shuddered with an enormous blast that shattered every window in the room. Books fell to the floor, sliding over one another from a height of some eight feet. I remember looking at them dumbly and saying to myself, 'How can a sonic boom do this?'

"A high wind swept through blowing plastic, books, covers, papers and other office materials throughout the wrecked space. All of us stood up and quickly assured ourselves that each of us was not hurt with the exception of Mrs. Morgan whose face had been cut with flying glass. I hoped the ceiling would hold.

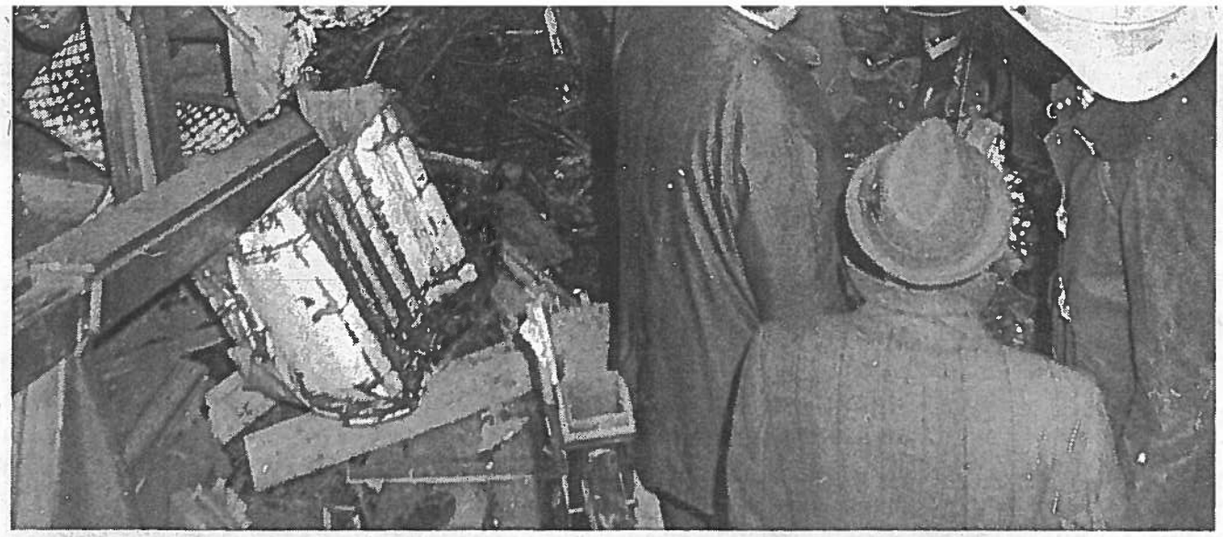
"We approached the door to find that the whole outer hall was blocked with fallen timber and plaster, and the wall separating the police department from the two outer rooms was gone. Water was pouring from broken ceiling pipes, running towards the front entrance and down the steps.

"Mrs. Thomas Butterworth was alone in her office at the time of the explosion. She attempted to move some of the wood that was blocking her exit directly across the hall from us. We then decided we would get our coats and when we got back to the door a bloodied police officer was making his way to us, removing pieces of wood as he went.

"Two other men with yellow helmets started to move debris away from the side entrance. Here a door had been blown right off its hinges and down the short flight of stairs. The three men then helped us step around and over the fallen hall ceiling to the outside where we joined many of our co-workers. They looked like survivors of an air raid.'

From the mall

P. 1/2



City, fire and police officials quickly gathered yesterday at police headquarters to view the damage caused by the first of three bomb blasts. This is what remains of the first floor hallway. (News-Times—Brooks)

And no one was killed

CD plan, phone action got Danbury humming

By KEN STACK

DANBURY — Communications are the unseen arteries for the lifeblood of a community — until they are cut off.

A telephone call to police in time of need. A radio call toa patrol car. Both are taken for granted.

But, yesterday, for a brief period, neither was available after an explosion ripped through police headquarters

News media descended

DANBURY — The national news media descended on Danbury like a flock of seagulls in search of fish shortly after word of the three explosions flashed across the nation.

At Danbury Airport the count was five helicopters and a large two-engine plane, according to Paul Annable, Airport Commission chairman.

The plane, a Grumman Mallard Amphibian, big enough to hold 12 to 14 people, belonged to the New York Daily News.

Three helicopters belonging to CBS, one carrying an executive, one from CBS news, and one from CBS-TV landed shortly thereafter.

A helicopter from NBC news also arrived.

A fifth helicopter, belonging to the National Guard and carrying a state police sergeant, also landed.

demolishing the interior and severing normal police communications.

Although one police car was selected almost immediately as the command vehicle to serve as headquarters, the unexpected and potentially dangerous situation triggered a rapid response by civil defense and the Southern New England Telephone Co.

When another explosion less than five minutes later shattered the windows at the Union Savings Bank, Arthur G. Potts, telephone district manager, in his office across the street went right to work.

In seconds he was on the street offering a police officer his company's assistance and use of its offices on Main or West streets as an emergency headquarters.

However, reacting even faster, Mayor Gino J. Arconti had issued the order to activate the civil defense emergency operations center at the War Memorial under Peter Winter, the center officer.

The center had been used for fires and floods. This was the first time the civil defense base was used by all city departments.

As the call went out alerting civil defense workers, including a 15-man communications team among the about 150 who responded, telephone personnel were dispatched to restore normal police communications.

Civil defense radio equipment was put on the air to provide police communications while telephone company construction crews, installation and maintenance crews, foremen, cable crews and even sales representatives converged on the War Memorial to restore lines and help answer the increased demand for new lines.

Within an hour interim phone service was in working order using the 18 phones at the War Memorial and the temporary number was being broadcast on the radio.

By 12:10 p.m. the new system had been tied into the old lines and the regular police phone number was back in use.

In addition to restoring the police phone system, telephone personnel also installed 10 new phones at the center for newspapers, state police and federal officials.

The center, Winter said, would operate as police headquarters as long as the department requires the equipment.

Potts credited plant workers, installers and central office personnel with a cooperative effort in tying in the new emergency system. Winter noted emergency plans set up in the past proved worthwhile and, while a few bugs appeared, he said: "On the whole it ran better than expected."

Court building cleared

DANBURY —Circuit Court felt the effects of yestersay's explosion also, when court was adjourned for an hour, following the police station explosion.

The loud "bang" shook the Circuit Court building, startling people inside the courtroom. Court personnel, looking outside to determine the cause of the explosion, saw smoke pouring from the police station.

Judge James Henebry adjourned court, and the building was cleared for safety precautionary reasons during that time.

Two men, appearing in court later in the afternoon for arraignment, had been in the basement lockup of the police station during the incident.

Oscar Brandon, of Liberty St., who was arraigned on charges of driving under the influence of alcohol, appeared visibly shaken, with blood stains on the sleeve of his sweater. He was released on a $200 no cash bond for a court appearance of March 16.

back out the door when I heard the explosion from the Mall."

Jack McConkey, who is employed at Mack's Men's Store across the street from the bank, was waiting on a customer, Mrs. Robert Poodiack.

"When the explosion occurred, she (Mrs. Poodiack) said, 'My mother's in there!'

"I ran across the street to see if her mother was all right. Glass was flying and people were running.

"A few minutes later Mrs. Poodiack's mother, (Mrs. Wilma Anderson) came out of the building. She was wearing a red coat.

"She said she was standing in line at the bank when someone ordered everybody to lay down. She turned, saw a man with a machinegun who yelled, 'Hey you in the red coat! Lay on the floor!'"

Standing in awe

Harold Banks, watchmaker at Sturdevant's Photo Shop said that he looked out the window immediately after the explosion at the bank. "On this side of the street (opposite the bank) people seemed to be just standing still in awe.

"Norman Buzaid (who occupies an attorneys office on the second floor of the bank building) was yelling down from his window "Block off all the traffic!'"

Mrs. Robert Schildbach of 27 Osborne St., a telephone company service representative, was at work across the street from the bank when the explosion went off there.

"We didn't even know anything was going on until we heard the explosion," she said. "Then we all ran to the window and saw people running from all directions into the bank to check on the situation."

A few minutes later, Mrs. Schildbach said, people started coming out of the bank, "a couple of them with blood on their faces."

Telephone company employes, she added, were unaware of the explosion at police headquarters until an ambulance stopped in front of the bank. "It was already occupied," Mrs. Schildbach said, "and one of the employes shouted, 'That's a policeman. They must have gotten the police station too!'"

Lines tied up

One of the immediate results of the incident was that it became difficult to place calls because all lines were kept busy as people all over town tried to find out what was going on.

"Even at the telephone company we had a short wait for an outside line, and that's unusual," Mrs. Schildbach said. "Usually we get a dial tone immediately so I guess things were pretty well tied up."

From the mall

"When it went off," said Robert Townsend, an employe in the Lafayette Radio shop in the mall, "everyone started running through the store."

"What the hell was that," the manager of the store asked.

"The sign probably fell down," Townsend replied.

Jack Agati, an employe in Cranes Mens Shop, monitored some of the action on a scanner radio he had tuned to police frequencies.

"Someone walked into the store and said that the Police station had blown up. I went inside the store and turned on the scanner and heard that the bank had been hit."

"No sooner had that happened than the explosion rocked the Grand Way. I thought I was back in Korea. I thought that there was going to be more."

Ronald Church, an employe of another store in the mall, had recieved a call from his wife who was in Dan Ridge Motors, across the street from the police station when it was struck.

"Not more than five seconds after she hung up the explosion hit," he said. "I thought it was a chain reaction. You wonder where to go when something like this happens."

Church's wife witnessed two of the three explosions.

As stated, she was in Dan Ridge Motors and saw the explosion in the police station.

"We heard this boom and saw smoke and glass coming from the building." After she called her husband in the mall she started down Main Street with her two children and saw the explosion in the bank.

"I thought the whole town was going up," she said.

"For a moment I thought we might be at war with another country."

Mrs. Robert Ross was probably the only employe in the mall who didn't hear the explosion there.

"I was under a hair drier and didn't hear a thing," she said. "I just saw everyone running towards the Grand Way."

Air raid sirens began sounding

DANBURY — During the late morning, Danbury's air raid sirens began sounding.

Whether or not it was sounded intentionally or went off by accident was not immediately determined.

Paul Annable, who was acting Civil Defense director in the early 1950's, designed and installed the system which is normally tested periodically.

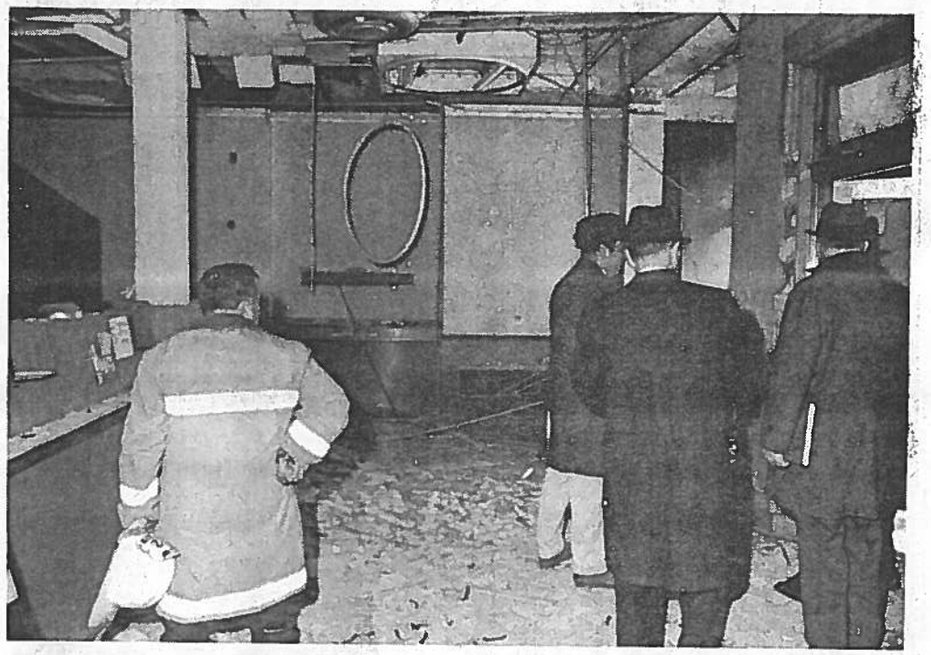
It was installed so that it could be set off manually by a single switch in the police station, as well as by other means.

Whether or not the force of the police station explosion set off the alarm was not immediately known.

P. 2/2 N-T 2-14-70

Three explosions . . . injuries, destruction

The first explosion in yesterday's daring robbery of the Union Savings Bank knocked out the radio room in police headquarters. Battered Fluorescent fixtures hang where the dispatcher should be sitting. (News-Times—Brooks)



Police and fire officials survey the damage done to the Union Savings Bank where two armed bandits made off with more than $40,000 before tossing a bomb back into the building. This second explosion took place three minutes after the blast at police headquarters. (News-Times—Brooks)

News-Times photos by Roger Brooks, Robert West, Bob Chuvala

p. 1½

The third explosion took place in the parking lot of the Danbury Mall when the two bandits blew up the car in which they drove from the bank to the Mall and a second vehicle parked along side. Special crews from State Police quickly arrived on the scene and started sifting through the debris for evidence. (News-Times—Brooks)

Detective Capt. Charles P. Chelso was one of 25 persons treated at the Danbury Hospital following the three bomb explosions that were part of a carefully thought out bank robbery plan. Capt. Chelso was in the police department at the time of the explosion. (News Times—West)

State Police headed by Police Comsr. Leo J. Mulcahy, center, quickly arrived on the scene yesterday to aid in the bank robbery, bomb explosion probe. With Mulcahy are Major Samuel Rome, right, and Mayor Gino J. Arconti. (News-Times—Chuvala)

2 bombs may have wrecked police station building

DANBURY — Fire Marshal Alton Spencer said last night that there was the possibility of two bombs involved in the explosion which destroyed the police station yesterday.

"One bomb could have been placed on the second floor, this would have been the smaller one," he said, "and another, much larger bomb was on the first floor."

"I don't believe they were fused together," he said. He explained that they probably would have some sort of timing devices on them set so they would go off simultaneously. The building, the former Main Street school, was considered structurally strong.

The bombs which rocked the Union Savings Bank and destroyed the car in the Danbury mall were much smaller than the ones which struck the police station.

"It was fortunate that the people in the bank were made to lie down," he said. "If any were standing they could have easily been killed."

Spencer said that he was not sure what the bombs were composed of.

"It could have been TNT or dynamite or any highly explosive substance," he said.

"There is so much damage and rubble it is hard to tell immediately what went off," he continued.

Spencer discounted the use of gasoline or other flammable substances in the explosions because there were no fires involved.

"The only reason there was a fire in the parking lot (of the mall) was that the car in which the bomb was placed had gas in the tank," he said.

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The News-Times

Vol. 87 No. 39 | 10c Daily at Newsstand | Danbury, Conn. 06810, Saturday, February 14, 1970 | Phone 744-5100

3 hunted in city bombings

A tired chief

Marine a prime suspect

By GARY THOMSON

DANBURY — Police sifted scant evidence in Danbury's temporary police headquarters today while the search for three men involved in yesterday's bombing spree and bank robbery continued.

Reliable sources said an AWOL Marine from Fairfield County who worked with explosives in the service is a prime suspect. He is being hunted.

At least 35 Federal Bureau of Investigation agents joined state and local police at the Danbury War Memorial for a 9 a.m. meeting to sift through the meager clues.

Although first reports indicated two men were involved in the robbery of about $35,000 from the Union Savings Bank, Danbury Police Chief William F. Tobin said three men were involved.

"Two went into the building," said Tobin, "and a third waited outside."

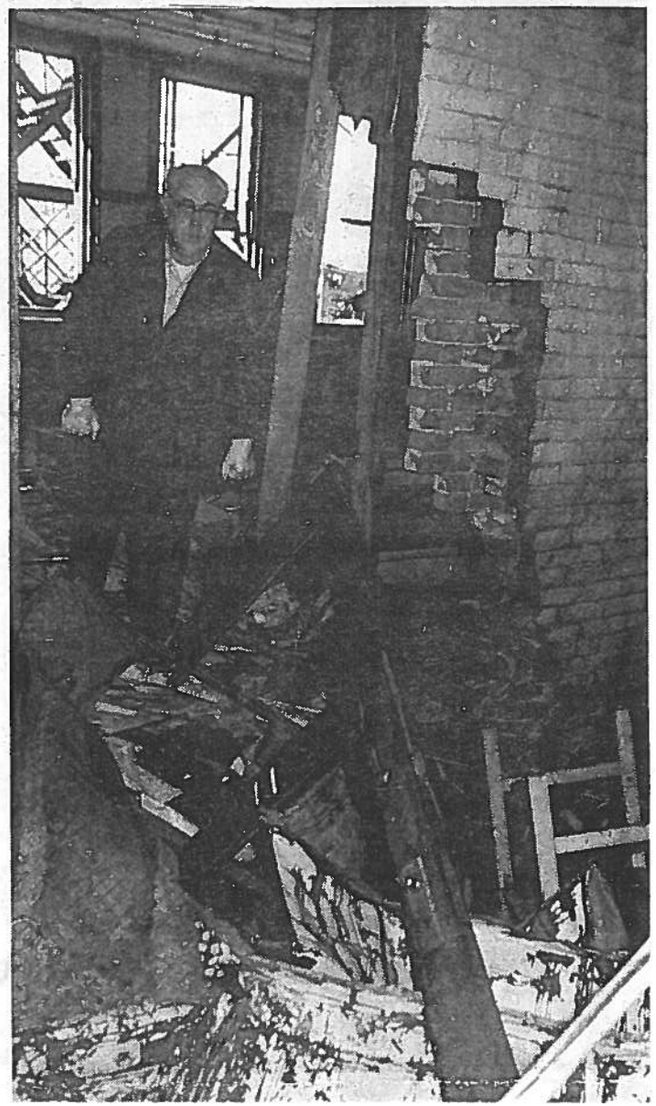
He declined further comment.

The New York Post reported today that the FBI and police were investigating possible ties between the Danbury holdup and robberies in Missouri and Delaware.

The Post said a Union, Mo., holdup three months ago was preceded by a bomb blast and that similarities of another nature were present in a $100,000 bank robbery in Wilmington, Del., 11 days ago and an $80,000 holdup in Pacific, Mo., last May.

Twenty-six persons were injured, none critically, in the series of bomb blasts which rocked Danbury yesterday morning. Miraculously, only two persons admitted to Danbury Hospital required further medical care.

Mrs. Rose Guarino, of 16 Wood St., a



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A tired chief

Police Chief William F. Tobin was home sick when bandits blew up the police station and robbed the Union Savings Bank. He rushed down to newly established police headquarters at the War Memorial to head up the investigation. Here he confers with Patrolman Valentine Coelho. (News-Times—Chuvala)

Bank, headquarters in shambles

Buildings' use uncertain

By KEN STACK

DANBURY — "You have to see it to believe it," said Charles W. Sturdevant, Union Savings Bank president, when asked what the bomb did to the building yesterday.

Sturdevant said he was waiting for a report on the holdup before the explosion. "We are still waiting," he said. "The officers are still investigating."

Because of the investigation, he added, insurance estimators and bank personnel were prevented from entering the building to determine the exact extent of the damage.

Until the survey is made, Sturdevant said, it will be impossible to tell if the bank will be able to reopen for business Monday.

The president said bank customers should not be concerned about their funds because the loss is insured.

"As soon as we get permission to enter from the police," he said, "we will have a better idea of how much work has to be done. I hope to be able to do some business Monday if at all possible."

Sturdevant also said accounting machines had been damaged, but did not know if this was a result of the blast because mechanics were prevented from entering the bank.

"It looks a little messy now," he reported, "but when we get it cleaned up it may not be so bad."

Building Inspector Paul Garofalo said he had not inspected the bank to see if it was structurally sound.

He did examine police headquarters, also hit by an explosion.

"All offices on the first floor," he said, "were badly damaged as well as most of those on the second floor."

He also noted the two brick "bearing walls" in the center of the building had been fractured and were in "bad shape." However the exterior walls appear to have stood up to the blast, he said.

No estimate of the damage has been made, Garofalo said, because it will include not only the building but mechanical equipment and office supplies inside, which were destroyed.

The building, according to the inspector, probably could be rebuilt on the exterior frame. That decision will be made after a thorough evaluation, he said.

His reaction after going through the building:

"It was awful."

day morning. Miraculously, only two persons admitted to Danbury Hospital required further medical care.

Mrs. Rose Guarino, of 16 Wood St., a Board of Education employe at an office in the police station, is in satisfactory condition with cut legs.

Mrs. Catherine Troccola of 11 Summer St., Chief Tobin's secretary, is in fair condition with cuts of the arms and a possible broken leg.

Experts from the New York City bomb squad searched the ruins of the police station, the bank and car which was blown up at the Danbury Mall to discover the types of bombs used.

Danbury Fire Marshall Alton Spencer said the bombs were home-made and used black powder. He said they also had timing devices.

There are conflicting reports on exactly how many bombs exploded at the Danbury police station.

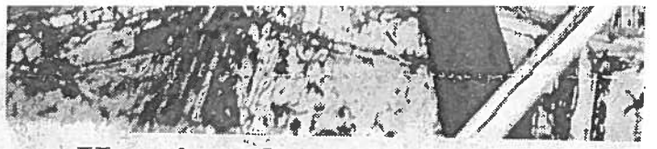
Federal agents said only one bomb exploded but Deputy Police Chief Arnold Schulze believes there were two.

Schulze was in his office in the front hallway of the police station at 10:41 a.m. yesterday. He heard a "hissing" noise, jumped up from his chair and ran into the hallway.

A piece of the ceiling hit Schulze on the head and he ran for the front door. Just as he reached the door, the second bomb went off.

All officials agree the first bomb at

Continued on Page 7



Here's where it started

This is the spot where it is believed the first bomb exploded yesterday at police headquarters. Officer Robert Paquette is standing directly in what was the door to the radio room. Blast damage is visible on the brick wall at right. (News-Times—Brooks)

How it happened:

10:40 a.m.: Explosion at police headquarters.

10:41 a.m.: Mayor Gino J. Arconti walks rapidly to scene, orders emergency operations set up in War Memorial building. State Police Sgt. John Lombardo reports explosion over radio to Ridgefield Barracks. Ambulances, fire equipment dispatched.

Approximately 10:42 a.m.: Two armed men enter Union Savings Bank.

10:43 a.m.: State police receive phone report of armed robbery at bank. Assistant Fire Chief John Fusek orders ambulances. Headquarters asks help from police in six towns. First city ambulance leaves headquarters with six injured.

10:44 a.m.: Explosion at Union Savings Bank. State police receive phone call describing white station wagon leaving scene at high rate of speed.

10:45 a.m.: First injured arrive at Danbury Hospital. City ambulance on way to hospital picks up injured in front of bank.

Approximately 10:46 a.m.: Southern New England Telephone offers all facilities, orders crews to War Memorial. Citizens begin directing downtown traffic.

Approximately 10:49 a.m.: Car explodes in Danbury Mall parking lot.

By 11:00 a.m.: State police have notified all local police in Connecticut, New York State Police, state police headquarters in Hartford. Roadblocks set up.

11:08 a.m.: St. Joseph's School on upper Main Street evacuated because city officials feared possible gas leaks.

11:10 a.m.: All essential phones at CD headquarters working.

11:30 a.m.: FBI agents arrive.

11:35 a.m.: State police receive bomb threat at Shopwell in Brookfield.

Noon: State police call in troopers, Bureau of Identification, state fire marshal's office and detectives.

12:10 p.m.: Civil Defense Emergency Operations Officer Peter Winters announces from CD nerve center "all departments of the city government are completely operable . . . situation has been stabilized ... all injured have been taken to hospital . . . police patrols set up for entire city . . ."

U.S. planes slam Viet Reds in Laos

SAIGON (AP) — Scores of American fighter-bombers are flying direct combat support for Laotian Government ground troops under attack by North Vietnamese forces around the Plain of Jars, informed sources in Saigon said today.

The sources said the missions originate at a half-dozen bases in Thailand, and implied that some planes may be using the Da Nang Air Base in South Vietnam and U.S. 7th Fleet carriers in the Tonkin Gulf.

The stepped-up air effort in direct support of Laotian ground troops will not detract from the 300 to 400 sorties a day being flown against the Ho Chi Minh trail network, the source said. Bombing sorties are being flown around the clock to meet the requirements of both missions.

Although President Nixon said last fall that American bombers are attempting to "interdict" the movement of North Vietnamese troops and supplies down the Ho Chi Minh trail, the United States has never publicly admitted that its planes fly direct combat support for Laotian forces.

Sources said North Vietnamese troops had captured at least eight outposts around the junction of Route 7 and Route 71 near Nong Pet at the northeastern edge of the Plain of Jars.

"These are strongpoints on the hills that overlook the roads," said one source. "They are the controlling elements for getting onto the plain by road. The North Vietnamese have captured most of them, but they still do not have unrestricted access."

losses of Lao government forces as "light."

The U.S. Embassy in Laos reported that the long-expected North Vietnamese offensive in the Plain of Jars area had begun.

"I think the enemy will put on more pressure," said one source. "This looks like a three-month operation."

The source indicated that government forces would not attempt to hold the Plain of Jars, but would fight orderly delaying actions and try to inflict heavy casualties on the North Vietnamese.

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Infantry captain accused

Another GI faces murder charge

New York Times News Service

WASHINGTON — The attorney for Capt. Thomas K. Willingham, the highest-ranking American soldier to be charged with crimes at Songmy, said Friday his client was accused of killing 20 Vietnamese civilians.

The attorney, Robert McKinley, said in a telephone interview that Willingham had been ordered to conduct a search and destroy mission in the vicinity of Songmy March 16, 1968. At the time, he was a first lieutenant in Company B, Fourth Battalion, Third Infantry.

Although reluctant to discuss the

A spokesman for the Department of Defense said Army records indicated that one soldier in the company was killed in action and seven others wounded that day. None were in the platoon commanded by Willingham, according to the Army.

Although the Army announced Thursday that Willingham had become the fifth soldier to be charged with committing crimes in Songmy March 16, 1968, the specific nature of the charges was not made public.

McKinley said today that the charges allege that Willingham "did murder

Fort Meade, Md., for the first time Thursday. McKinley said that the 25-year-old officer "denies that he killed anyone."

The legal difficulties surrounding the Songmy incident, which involves at least one other infantry company and 36 more suspects, have been complicated by the involvement of Willingham. In addition to being charged with unpremeditated murder under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, which is punishable by a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, he has also been charged with murder "in vio-

Convention of 1907 and the Beneva Convention of 1949.

The treaties are intended to codify the rules and principles of international law governing the conduct of warring nations. The laws provided the legal basis for the Nuremberg trials of Nazis as war criminals.

The principal offenses under these laws include a number of criminal actions regarded as "conventional war crimes." These involve the deliberate killing of unarmed civilians and the reckless destruction of property without military significance.

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3 bombers hunted

Continued from Page 1

the police station exploded at 10:41 a.m. Police believe a bomb may have been placed in a large ashtray in the front hallway.

The interior of the building was a shambles. A large hole was blown in the hallway floor, water pipes were broken. Nearly every window in the building was blown out.

At 10:44 a.m., a bomb exploded at the Union Savings Bank. Police said two men walked into the bank at 10:42 a.m., and, with military precision, carried out the robbery.

The two men, one armed with a shotgun, the other with a sawed-off shotgun or carbine, herded the 12 bank employes into a back room.

While they were busy stuffing a canvas bag they carried into the bank with bills from the cashier's cages, a customer walked into the bank.

The customer, the Rev. Claire Ingham of the First Congregational Church, was ordered to lie on the floor behind the cashiers' counter.

The robbers left shortly afterward without warning the 13 persons in the bank of a bomb. The explosion, from a bomb apparently placed in a front office, blew out the front windows and pulled part of the ceiling to the floor.

The two men inside the bank ran outside, up an alley and into a parking lot behind the bank. Police refused to say where the third man was waiting.

The two in the bank were described by Rev. Ingham as "about 30, one wearing sunglasses, the other with long hair and a mustache."

The ran to a white, 1961 Chrysler station wagon parked in the lot, jumped in and drove away.

At 11 a.m., a bomb exploded in a car at the Danbury Mall parking lot. The car matched the description of the getaway car.

Police said two license plates were found near the destroyed auto. One was a New York plate stolen from a car parked at Kennedy Airport last week. The other was a New Jersey plate taken from a car at LaGuardia Airport for about a week.

Police said the robbers didn't wear masks because they must have known the bank didn't have surveillance cameras.

A law was passed a year ago last November requiring banks to have minimum security precautions, including cameras.

"Apparently the bank didn't hear of the law," one state policeman remakred sarcastically.

Bank officials refused to comment.

Within 10 minutes of the initial explosion which destroyed police headquarters, Danbury police set up a mobile headquarters at the War Memorial.

A state police sergeant radioed reports of the first blast to the Ridgefield Barracks at 10:42 p.m., prompting state police to dispatch several cars to the area.

State police set up roadblocks on all major roads leading into Danbury, sealing off the city from any cars entering and searching every vehicle leaving the city.

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It's a mess

The hallway of the basement floor of Danbury police headquarters was a mass of tangled debris after a bomb or bombs made a shambles of the station. (News-Times — Brooks)

Danbury responds

Sirens enlist volunteer army

DANBURY — Soon after three explosions rocked Danbury, state, county and city organizations began functioning efficiently.

The voluntary response to the emergency was almost total.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation, state and local police immediately teamed up in their search for the criminals.

Within 15 minutes after sirens wailed and the alert was broadcast, the civil defense emergency plan went into effect. The telephone alert system called in volunteers.

Auxiliary and special police and local rescue personnel reported to civil defense headquarters in the War Memorial without being called.

Nurses downtown heard the air raid sirens which sounded at the first explosion and stopped shopping to rush to the hospital.

All Fairfield County ambulances were put on emergency standby and the police chiefs from Bethel, Ridgefield and Bridgeport reported to Danbury to offer services.

The secretarial pool from City Hall reported to CD headquarters to man typewriters and the telephone company sent an emergency crew with extra telephones.

The Salvation Army and the El Dorado restaurant supplied food and coffee at CD headquarters.

Peter Winter, head of the operation in the War Memorial, said telephones were jammed with people offering assistance. So many people called the operation efficiency was hampered.

"Many, many people called in to help," said Winter, "but priorities had to go to trained personnel."

"We want to thank all those who offered their assistance even though we could not use them," he said.

Aid response to bombing 'tremendous'

DANBURY — Citing what he termed "a tremendous response," Peter Winter, Civil Defense Emergency operations officer, said he was pleased with the assistance offered during yesterday's emergency by state police and civil defense personnel.

Among the many representatives of state departments in Hartford arriving on the scene, Winter said, was a representative of the State Department of Health who offered his service.

However, Winter said, most state officials arriving from Hartford had been dispatched immediately after initial reports received there indicated a school had been bombed.

The misunderstanding, Winter explained, probably arose because immediately after the blast at police headquarters St. Peter's School was ordered evacuated as a precautionary measure.

Local response was just as impressive, the emergency officer said. He said about 150 volunteer civil defense workers had left their jobs and assumed their emergency positions minutes after the explosion.

Among the many workers taking their assigned positions was a nurse who was shopping when the alarm sounded. Leaving her basket and groceries in mid-aisle, she was one of the first arrivals at the War Memorial.

It has not been determined whether the air raid alarm which alerted many people and is activated from police headquarters had been turned on by police or by the force of the explosion at the building.

War Memorial events scrubbed

DANBURY —Because Danbury police headquarters is now located in the War Memorial building, all other scheduled activities have been postponed indefinitely, according to War Memorial director Daniel Penyak.

The War Memorial became the city police center of operations following the explosion that gutted the police station yesterday.

State police alerted in fugitive hunt

BREWSTER — New York State Police reacted to the bombings and robbery in Danbury yesterday by throwing up road-blocks sealing the New York - Connecticut state line.

According to Investigator R.J. Lamontagne, all patrol cars and stations were alerted from troop headquarters at Hawthorne.

Roving patrols were set up all along the state line keeping constant radio contact with the Connecticut State Police Barracks in Ridgefield.

New York State Police traced license plate numbers of the get-away car to markers reported stolen from a parked car at LaGuardia airport in New York City last week.

The News-Times
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1970

Restore or build a new one?

The ravaged Danbury police building as it appeared this morning, windows boarded up and debris covering the front lawn hidden by snow. City officials await report of structural engineers to find out if building is sound. Temporary police station will be across Main St. in former A and P store. (News-Times—Brooks)

Some degree of normalcy at bank

DANBURY — The Union Savings Bank opened for normal banking hours today — but under subnormal conditions.

Charles Sturdevant, president, and Gilbert Benson, vice president, told The News-Times the bank will be operating during normal hours, thanks to cooperation of a lot of people, after it was bombed by robbers Friday.

They stressed, however, customers can help speed the return to complete normalcy by coming to the bank only if it is urgent, until repairs have been completed.

"We are open for business, but are opening possible, said "cooperation from everyone has been wonderful, including the construction people who have worked throughout the weekend."

The officials said other banks in the city and the area have offered services working under adverse conditions temporarily," the bank officials said. At the same time, they advised that all safe deposit boxes, all records, including mortgages and savings, are undamaged.

Sturdevant and Benson, who with others at the bank worked throughout Saturday and Sunday to make today's and facilities, and the National Association of Savings Banks also offered assistance.

On Friday, the bank issued a brief statement assuring its customers that all losses are covered by insurance.

Much of the ceiling was blown out and the rest has been torn down. A string of electric light bulbs has been hung so tellers and others can work.

A policeman stands guard at the entrance around the clock. All windows blown out by the bomb have been boarded up.

Heaviest damage appears to be in the customer areas and near the entrance to the bank. The bomb is believed to have gone off just inside the door and immediately to the right.

Police theorize it may have been a plastic bomb which was slapped against the wall as the robbers ran out of the building. A survey of the floor shows no particular burn marks or holes which would have resulted if the bomb was on the floor.

Police say the getaway car apparently was in the rear parking lot of the bank and left via the entrance on Chapel Place.

The Rev. Clare Ingham, minister of education at the First Congregational Church, was ordered by the gunmen to get down on the floor after he entered the bank. Because he has a fractured collarbone, he told the robbers he could not get all the way down. He apparently then was ordered into a side office. Bank officials, employes and customers were already on the floor behind the counter, to the rear of the bank, and in other areas.

Police yesterday learned another customer whom they identified only as "a GI familiar with weapons" also entered the bank while the robbery was in progress and was ordered on the floor.

The GI told police one of the men was carrying a .45 revolver and the other a sawed-off shotgun. Earlier reports were that one carried a machine gun.

Witnesses saw two men run out of the bank, into the alley and leave from the rear parking lot in a white station wagon.

Mayor Gino Arconti spent some time Sunday afternoon talking with Sturdevant and Benson and offered them assistance of city departments.

City Building Inspector Paul Garofalo checked the bank building Sunday morning and said the building is sound despite the blast.

Police, the FBI and others agree the bomb at the bank was considerably smaller than the device exploded at the police station.

Schools emptied 'just in case'

DANBURY — St. Joseph's and St. Peter's Parochial schools were evacuated last Friday — not because of a bomb threat, but as a precautionary measure.

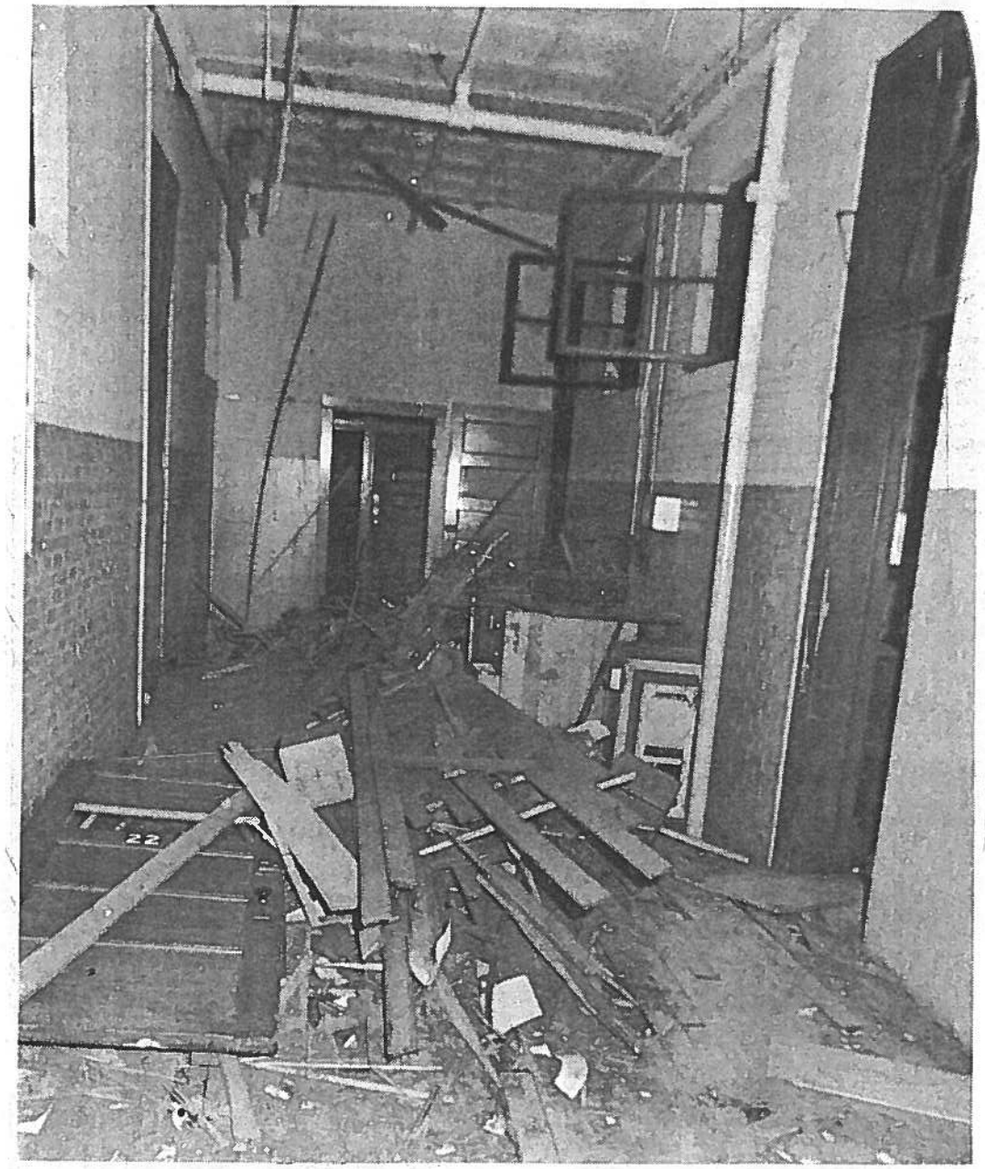
This was disclosed by Mayor Gino J. Arconti who said his message to evacuate the schools was apparently misinterpreted somewhere along the line.

The mayor explained he was talking with the principal at St. Peter's, the Rev. James Dennis when the first bombs went off.

"My first reaction," Arconti said, "was gas explosions and I told Father Dennis to get the kids out of the school building (which is located only a short distance south of police headquarters).

"I then sent word to St. Joseph's to clear out that school (also on Main Street but some seven blocks to the north.)

"Someone must have interpreted my message as a bomb scare, but it was merely a precaution," Arconti said.



Second floor damage

Shambles along corridor on second floor of the bombed Danbury police headquarters show force of the explosion. Police say they're still not certain if a second bomb exploded on the second floor which houses Civil Service Commission office, RESCUE and other educational facilities. (News-Times—Brooks)

Mayor says U.S. cool to bomb aid

DANBURY — Continuing is efforts to find funds for construction of a new police headquarters to replace the building bombed last Friday, Mayor Gino J. Arconti has been unable to obtain what he considers a satisfactory offer of federal assistance.

While crediting the state for "doing what they can to help us within their limits," the mayor was critical yesterday of the response he has received from federal officials he contacted for financial assistance.

"At the moment I can't say I'm optimistic," Arconti said concerning his conversations with officials in Washington.

"I will not give up," the mayor said, "and I intend to pursue this relentlessly. It's gotten to the point where they have to put up or shut up."

Obviously discouraged, Arconti added: "I'm tired of reading about the great things they (federal programs) are doing. When it's time to produce where the problems are — and that's in the cities — they fall short of the mark."

Arconti said he intends to write President Richard Nixon directly concerning the problem.

Although no definite figures are expected to be ready before tomorrow, the mayor said yesterday he hoped to find sufficient money to construct a new building without a bond issue. He added that if his efforts fail he would not hesitate to seek such authorization.

Seven architects from Fletcher - Thompson, a Bridgeport firm engaged by the city, began work yesterday to estimate the damage at the police station, the former Main Street school. Their estimate, Mayor Arconti said, would be used in final talks with the in - surance company, probably tomorrow.

Preliminary surveys, the mayor said, indicate that the damage caused by the blast will exceed the approximately $400,000 insurance coverage. The building has an assessed value of $222,380 not including personal property, according to Evo J. Butera, tax assessor.

If a settlement for that amount can be worked out, Arconti said, he assumed a building could be obtained without a bond issue.

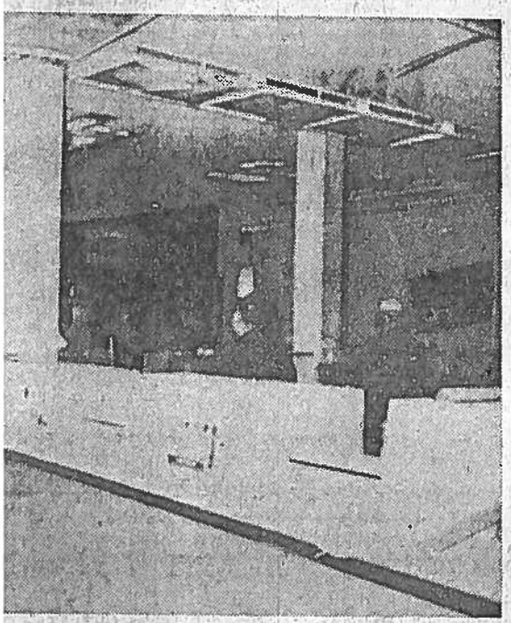
While, the mayor is seeking federal and state assistance for the project, he has also received a report from the city finance departments on revenue unanticipated in this year's budget.

"I should have a better idea of the exact dollar figures in the next couple of days," Arconti said. "Once that's determined, we'll select the swiftest method to obtain a permanent police headquarters and I hope to present recommendations to the Common Council at a special session the latter part of this week."

Plans are also being drawn for conversion of the former A&P market on Main Street for use as a temporary police headquarters. The mayor estimated that, even with prompt action, a new building for the police will probably not be ready for at least a year.

RDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 14, 1970 — 40 PAGES ★ ★ ★ ★ 10 CENTS

vastate Danbury; Escape With Loot



(AP Wire Photo)

Explosion

3 Blasts, 25 Hurt; Police Station Hit

BY RUSS HAVOURD

DANBURY — Within a span of 15 minutes Friday, two men bombed the police station, robbed and bombed a bank and blasted an abandoned car in a busy shopping center, sending this city into a state of emergency. At least 25 persons were injured in the powerful explosions that destroyed the police station, blew debris 50 feet through windows of the Union Savings Bank and left the car twisted nearly beyond recognition.

All but two of the injured were released from Danbury Hospital Friday. Mrs. Rose Gaurino, 43, of 16 Wood St. and Mrs. Catherine Troccola, 52, of 11 Somers St., were reported in good condition with numerous cuts.

The first blast rocked the police station at 10:20 a.m. The bank and car explosions followed within 15 minutes.

All three were along a one-mile stretch of Main Street.

Pictures on Page 16

No official totals on how much the gunmen took from the bank were available late Friday night, but estimates placed the figure between $35,000 and $40,000.

Mayor Gino J. Arconti declared the state of emergency minutes after the first bomb went off, mobilizing all regular and auxiliary police, the fire department, and Civil Defense volunteers. Navy reservists and National Guardsmen were called out to stand guard in the streets and around public utilities and the city's reservoir.

Air raid alarms sounded across the city for nearly two hours after being triggered by the police station blast.

St. Joseph's and St. Peter's elementary schools, both within a half mile of the police station, were evacuated after calls were received that there were bombs there. Police searched, but did not find any explosives.

Nearly all downtown businesses closed and Arconti placed the entire town on alert for possible evacuation.

Fire trucks were stationed near the explosion area on the possibility that gas mains may have been ruptured.

Emergency Headquarters

Police and Civil Defense personnel quickly mobilized emergency headquarters in Rogers Park War Memorial three blocks from the destroyed police station. Arconti said the basement emergency center was in operation within 15 minutes after the first explosion.

State police were alerted across the state and at least 50 troopers and detectives rushed to the city. The FBI was called into the case and police from surrounding towns were alerted, to set up roadblocks.

Police said two men were responsible for the explosions and robbery but did not rule out the possibility there was a third man driving the getaway car. The two were described as white males in their mid-to late-twenties. One was said to have had long hair; the other was described as hefty and wearing a mustache, possibly false.

The men left a bomb in the police station and after it exploded, entered the bank with guns drawn.

They ordered everyone to lie on the floor while they emptied several cash drawers. They then ordered customers and bank employes into a back room and fled, leaving a bomb near the main entrance.

Police said the men were armed with automatic pistols, but another report indicated one may have had a submachine gun or a sawed-off shotgun.

The two fled on foot down an alley and escaped. A passerby reportedly chased the two for a short distance but lost them.

The bandits then drove to the shopping center about a quarter of a mile away and set off the final blast in the car.

State police demolition experts were called in to examine the three sites to determine how much and what kind of explosives were used.

State police theorized the destroyed car may have been the one used during the initial phase of the "attack" and that another car was used for the getaway. No one reported seeing the getaway car.

State police said a New York license plate 3825-BC was found near the exploded car. The plate was reported stolen at Kennedy International Airport several days ago and New York state police have been called upon to assist Connecticut and federal officials.

State Police Commissioner Leo J. Mulcahy and majors Sam Rome and Thomas O'Brien arrived around noon.

Mulcahy said Gov. Dempsey has assigned all "the necessary persons" to handle the situation.

It was the last official working day for Rome, who announced his retirement as chief of the state police detective division last Monday. O'Brien heads the department's opera-

See DANBURY, Page 16, Col. 1

P. 2/4 Hartford Courant

ESTABLISHED 1764; VOL. (DAILY EDITION) CXXXIII No. 45 HARTFORD, CONN. SATI

Bank Bandits De Explosions Mask

Sirens Moan In Eerie Scene Following Raid

By RUSS HAVOURD

DANBURY — Riding down Main Street gave the impression war had been declared.

Fire trucks lined the normally busy four-lane road that was nearly deserted at noon. Police cars raced back and forth. Flashing red lights were everywhere.

An air raid alarm moaned in the distance, its grim rise-then-fall, rise-then-fall cry seeming to herald impending disaster.

Restaurants and small shops were closed. Pedestrians were few, and those who ventured onto Main Street huddled in small clusters. Officials in and out of uniform barked orders, cordoned off sections of the street.

Many were dazed . . . and gripped with fear.

Rumors Run Behind

When the three explosions ripped through a mile-long stretch of Main Street, wild rumors were not far behind.

A drug store owner said he thought racial groups or political radicals had scored the first blow in a terror spree. A woman—frenzied and dazed—couldn't reach her home to take her pneumonia-stricken son to the hospital for daily treatment.

Telephone communications were temporarily disrupted across some sections of town. Wives alone at home and unable to contact husbands. "When would the next explosion come?" they must have asked themselves. And worse—where would it be? . . . .

Children felt the grip of panic when prank calls threatened bombings at St. Peter's and St. Joseph's parochial schools.

Everyone Mobilized

Mayor Gino J. Arconti ordered all police, fire and Civil Defense regulars and volunteers mobilized. An emergency headquarters was thrown up in Rogers Park War Memorial — just three blocks from the sagging, crumbling floors of police headquarters.

In the crowded basement of that emergency center, police Lt. Walter Wayman was thankful to be alive.

"Friday the thirteenth has to be my luckiest day," he kept muttering, shaking his head.

Wayman had been in the station house basement when the blast rocked the 68-year-old foundation. He was knocked out of his chair by the impact but was unscathed.

Matter of Minutes

Two minutes later or earlier and he might have been in the corridor where a bomb ripped a gaping hole in a 12-inch-thick wall of brick.

James Brennan, manager of Goodyear Service Store, witnessed the blast.

"I heard a big boom and my windows shook. All of a sudden glass was flying all over the place.

"I saw one man picking his wife up They were just going inside the police station and she was knocked down."

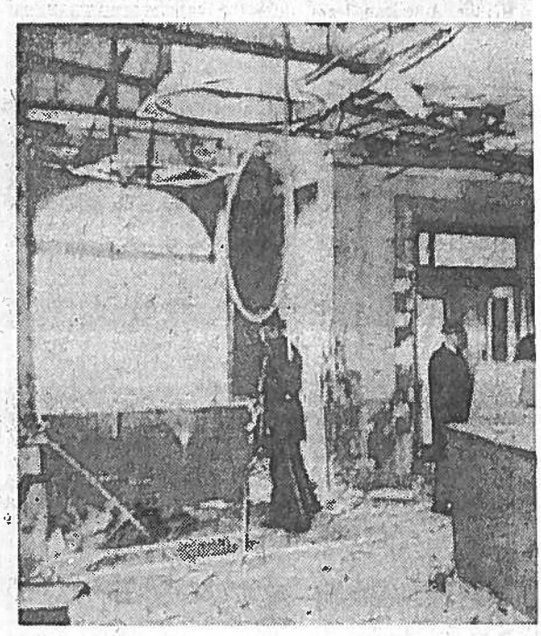
The couple crossed the street to Brennan's store and he helped the woman, Mrs. James Anderson, to Danbury Hospital. She joined 24 others there before the day was over, all suffering cuts from the thousands of knifing glass shards that ripped the air and anything in their path when bombs tore the station house and a few minutes later, Union Savings Bank.

There were ironies too.

On the cracked and broken windows of Grand Way supermarket near the car explosion were taped signs — "Warning. Shoplifting is a criminal offense."

And worst of all, Danbury Police Chief Bill Tobin had spent several hours on local radio stations exhorting the public into action.

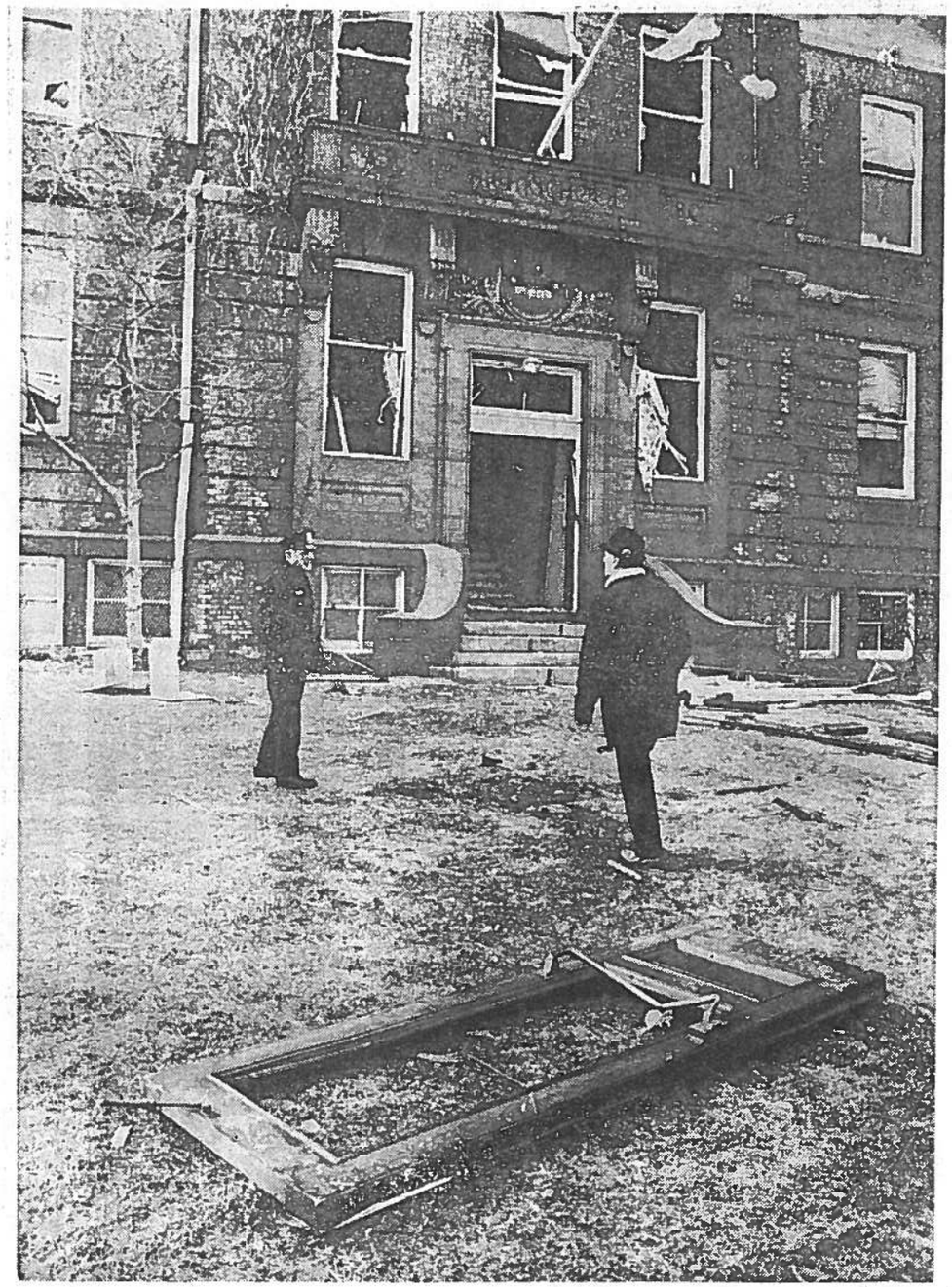
It was Crime Prevention Week in Danbury.



Bank After

HARTFORD COURANT
2/14/70

P. 1/4



p. 3/4

Danbury Blasted in Holdup

Continued From Page 1.

tions division, under which the detective branch will operate after Rome's retirement.

Local and state police along with Navy reservists cordoned off sections of Main Street around the police station and bank for several hours, allowing only official cars to pass.

Water Plants Guarded

Maj. Arnold Hyatt, the Civil Defense Director, said 100 auxiliary firemen and about 200 CD volunteers were mobilized shortly after the explosions. Guards were placed around several water filtering and power plants during initial phases of the emergency.

Arconti said all three explosions were touched off as diversions for the robbery and that there were no political or racial overtones.

He issued a bulletin around 2 p.m. saying "further anxiety is unnecessary" and the situation was under control. But he later said guards around utility and filter plants and the reservoir had not been relaxed. Armed state police stood vigil atop the War Memorial emergency center for most of the day.

Mike Goodman, a Danbury resident, told reporters he was passing the police station when the blast rocked the bustling business district of small stores and restaurants.

"I heard the blast and glass blew across the street," he said.

"People came running out of the station. Several were bleeding badly. Some people on the street ran inside. Then I heard the explosion in the bank and later the one in the mall.

"By that time police told me to get out of the area."

Arconti said there may have been two bombs in the police station. The blast, which originated in first floor hallway, blew all but a few windows out of the 68-year-old, three-story brick building.

He said the station was a total loss and that the first and second floors were weakened and sagging. Doors inside the station were blown off their hinges. Fallen plaster and glass littered the entire building.

The bomb was left against a wall in the first floor main corridor and ripped a hole five feet high and about three feet wide through a wall three brick layers thick.

Shattered glass was blasted as far as 75 feet from the building.

The bank explosion appeared less powerful, and only damaged the first floor of that three-story brick building. All windows in the front of the building were blown out, and plaster and electrical wiring was strewn over the floor.

The car parked at the mall, a late model white Chrysler, was blasted from inside.

The roof was blown off and a portion of one seat lay 30 feet from the wreckage. Windows in a station wagon next to the bombed car were shattered and one side was crushed by the explosion.

A Grand Way supermarket about 75 feet from the blast had numerous cracked and broken plate-glass windows.

25 Persons Injured By Glass Splinters

DANBURY — Flying glass caused by three explosions Friday injured at least 25 persons.

Officials said "it was a miracle no one was killed" in any of the blasts which ripped the police department and Union Savings Bank, both on Main Street, and an abandoned car in a busy shopping center parking lot.

Reported in good condition with numerous cuts at Danbury Hospital are Mrs. Rose Guarino, 43, of 16 Wood St., and Mrs. Catherine Troccola, 52, of 11 Somers St.

Treated and released were:

Leonard Wilkes of Southview Ave.

Lucy Roff of 16 Town Hill Ave.

Cpl. Peter Wojnilko of 38 Oak Ridge Gage.

Sgt. John Esposito of 23 Locust Ave.

Gyda Scherer of 33 Fairfield Drive, Brewster, N.Y.

Ethel Faust of 24 Prospect St., Ridgefield.

Victor Gracer of 436 Woodmont Ave., Bridgeport.

Mrs. Lulu Stone, and her husband Raymond Stone.

Margaret Morgan of 5 W. Redding Road.

Mrs Dorothy Colyer of 6 Wildman St.

Leo Gantert of 8 Ryder's Lane.

Miss Beatrice Jacobs, no address given.

Jerry Rockwell of 5 McDermott St.

Capt. Walter Risso of 16A Virginia Ave.

M ss Beatrice Jacobs, no address given.

Marge Fogarty of 19 Linron Drive.

Rocco Grosse of 102 Rose Hill Ave.

Detective Capt. Charles Chelso of 10 Tomlinson St.

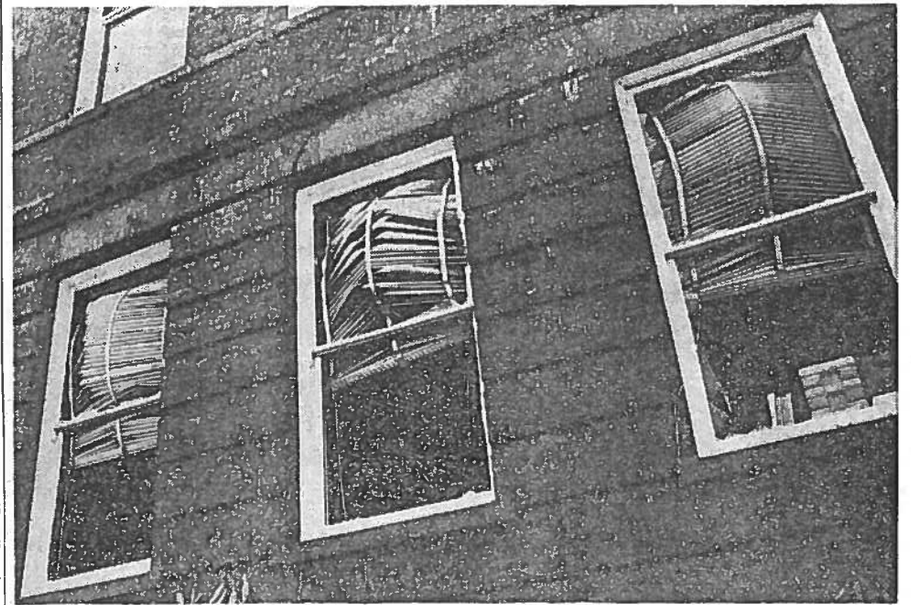
John McGarry of 14 Johnson Drive.

James Anderson, no address given.

Miss Frances Abbott, no address given.

Sgt. Art Dunn of 2 Coal Pit Hill.

Headquarters: Destroyed



Blast Rips Through Windows

2 Explosions Hit Police Cars

Continued From Page 1.

ley police car in mid-1968 but failed to go off. In October, 1968, Mayor Joseph Alioto of San Francisco has said police were targets of saboteurs because of sniping, bombings and false alarms in Bay Area cities.

Since 1968 there have been bomb explosions at business buildings near Danville, the Selective Service headquarters in San Rafael, the court house in Oakland, San Francisco department stores, the University of California at Berkeley, a liberal organization's office in Redwood City, and other buildings.

There have been seven explosions at power and telephone installation in the Oakland area. Police have not connected the bombings. Most are unsolved.

Police Chief Charles Gain of neighboring Oakland said he did not plan to step up security because of the Berkeley bombing but "our men will be cautious and circumspect."

Explosion Wrecks Car

P. 4/4 H. Courant 2-14-70

2/15/70

NEW YORK TIMES, SU

Dozens in Danbury Questioned For Leads on Robbery of Bank

Special to The New York Times

DANBURY, Conn., Feb. 14—More than two dozen persons were questioned today by the local and state police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation in efforts to find the men who robbed a bank here of $40,000 yesterday and exploded three diversionary bombs.

All except five were released quickly, but at least 20 others were to be questioned. The police indicated their belief that the criminals were well out of the area by sending out a nationwide alarm.

Law enforcement officials were considering the possibility that three men, rather than two, were involved in robbing the Union Savings Bank, and setting off bombs in the police headquarters, a bank and a car that took them to a parking lot from which they escaped in another car.

How Many Bombs?

They speculated that the third criminal was at the wheel of a car in which the robbers fled.

According to witnesses, the two men who robbed the bank were about medium height and young. One had a heavy mustache and long sideburns. The other wore sunglasses. The police said the robbers might have been wearing false hair.

The police were also becoming convinced that four bombs, not three, had been set off in less than 10 minutes, beginning at 10:25 A.M. They thought that two bombs, rather than one, heavily damaged Police Headquarters.

These developments were disclosed today during a news conference by Maj. Thomas O'Brien of the state police, as photographs of bank robbers were being rushed here from many parts of the country.

With Police Headquarters out of action, the authorities were working out of the basement of the War Memorial Building.

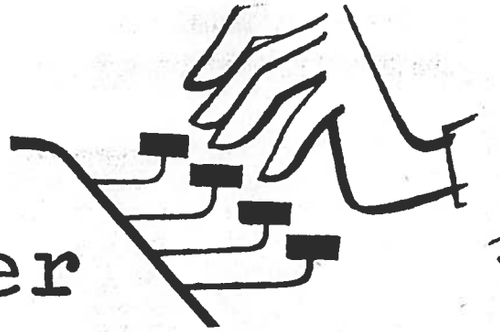
Civil defense representatives said the move was made relatively easy because the basement had been planned as emergency headquarters in the event Police Headquarters was made inoperative.

Of the 26 persons injured in the explosions, only two were still in the hospital and their condition was not considered serious.

Police Chief William F. Tobin, who was at work today, escaped serious injury because he was home yesterday with the flu. His office was badly damaged.

Along Main Street, where the Union Savings Bank is situated, there was more activity than usual on a Saturday. This was partly because yesterday's explosions forced many to postpone shopping chores and sightseers came to the area to look at the boarded-up windows of the bank.

Johnny Wooster



Feb '73
19?

Fred and Barbara Gervasoni of 16 Mountain Road reported signs of spring when they discovered seven or eight robins on their lawn early this morning.

The robins were eating berries on the bushes until their daughter Diane, 13, who had not yet left for school, offered them some bird seed.

Mrs. Louis S. (Jean) Marshall, who is known by many at Marshall's food store on West Street, Danbury, is convalescing at home in Newtown after a long stay in Danbury Hospital.

Bill Prescott of Danbury reminds us that on Friday, March 13, 1964, the Connecticut National Bank on Main Street was robbed of some $7,500 by a lone, armed man.

Prescott was in the bank at the time, and had the presence of mind to run out after the robber and catch sight of the get-away car's license number.

His efforts led to the arrest of the man and recovery of the stolen in addition to his receiving a letter from J. Edgar Hoover complimenting him for his "valuable assistance."

Prescott notes that last Friday the 13th was another bad day for the city, with the bombings and the robbery of the Union Savings Bank.

A local drugstore appears to be providing information on every possible domestic problem by filing The Complete Book on Home Entertainment on the same shelf with such handy to have volumes as Akido - Holds and Locks, Jukado Self Defense, and The Complete Book on Karate.

Danbury made the headlines across two oceans concerning the bombings and bank robbery.

Among those who published accounts of the Danbury bombings were the Atlantic and Pacific editions of Stars & Stripes, published in Darmstadt, Germany, and in Vietnam; and in the Japan Times, published in Tokyo.

Sgt. Fran Gallo, son of Fireman and Mrs. Roser Gallo of Danbury, a member of the Signal Corps in Vietnam, sent a copy to his parents.

The Pacific edition was published on Sunday and reached Danbury five days later. Fast delivery!

Two Brothers Are Arrested and Charged With Danbury Robbery

Special to The New York Times

DANBURY, Conn., March 7—Two brothers were arrested today in different states and charged with staging the bank robbery in Danbury Feb. 13 that was coordinated with bombings in the bank, the Danbury police headquarters and a parking lot.

John Russell Pardue, 27, was arrested in Danbury and arraigned before United States Commissioner Arthur Latimer on a Federal charge of bank robbery. He was ordered held in lieu of $250,000 bond in the state correctional center at Bridgeport.

James Peter Pardue, 23, was arrested by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Rockville, Md., a suburb of Washington. He was arraigned later in the day in Baltimore on the same charges as his brother and was also held in $250,0000 bail. James Pardue was listed as a resident of Lusby, Md., while his brother lived in Danbury.

The Danbury robbery and explosions were staged by two men who made off with more than $55,000 from the Union Savings Bank, according to the F.B.I. The explosions left 26 persons injured by flying glass and debris.

At the time of the Danbury robbery, officials disclosed that similar methods had been used by two men who held up a bank in Union, Mo., last November.

The police disclosed today that the Pardue brothers' father, J. Russell Pardue, a former Connecticut resident, had moved to Union last summer and had been discovered missing a week after the Union robbery.

The elder Pardue, 53, worked as an engineer for the Shell Oil Company in Connecticut, according to Sheriff H. Bill Miller of Union. He and his wife built a house in Union last fall, at which time Mr. Pardue was working for a Dallas-based plastics concern, the Texlite Company, Sheriff Miller said.

The sheriff said that he had learned of Mr. Pardue's disappearance when Mrs. Pardue tried to have divorce papers served on him. As far as can be determined, the sheriff said, Mr. Pardue was last seen Nov. 12.

Also missing, according to Sheriff Miller, is Mrs. Daisy Pardue, 79, the elder Pardue's mother and the grandmother of James and John Russell.

The arrest of John Pardue in Danbury was announced in a joint statement by Police Chief William Tobin, Maj. Thomas O'Brien of the Connecticut State Police and Charles E. Weeks of the F.B.I. New Haven office.

According to the statement the arrest culminated a three-week investigation, including work done by the New York City bomb squad, which was called in at the request of the Connecticut State Police.

The police said John Pardue had been arrested recently on a larceny charge when his estranged wife complained to Norwalk police that he had stolen things from his apartment. He had been free while awaiting trial on that charge.

Sheriff Miller said the Union authorities had compared notes with both the Connecticut police and those in Wilmington, Del., where a holdup in early February had indicated the same pattern.

The News-Times

Vol. 87, No. 58 | 10c Daily at Newsstand | Danbury, Conn. 06810, Monday, March 9, 1970 | Phone 744-5100

Where is father of bomb suspects?

By GARY THOMPSON

DANBURY — Missouri police are investigating the possibility two brothers arrested Saturday and charged with a Danbury bank robbery are involved in the disappearance of their father and grandmother.

John Russell Pardue, 27, of 13 Crane St., Danbury, and his brother, James Peter Pardue, 23, of Lusby, Md., were arrested Saturday on federal warrants charging them with the Feb. 13 robbery of $26,365 from the Union Savings Bank of Danbury, during which police headquarters and the bank were bombed.

Both are being held in lieu of $250,000 bond on the federal charges, but Danbury police have obtained detainer warrants requesting $500,000 bond apiece on local charges.

Franklin County, Mo., Sheriff William Miller speculates the brothers may have been involved in the Nov. 13 robbery of $18,000 from the United Bank of Union, Mo.

Miller said today his office is investigating the possibility the brothers robbed the bank and "holed up" at the father's home.

"We set up roadblocks right after the Union robbery," says Miller, "so we think whoever did that job must have holed up nearby."

Federal authorities say the investigation is still open.

"We are very definitely investigating possible tie-ins with other robberies," says FBI Agent Charles Weekes.

The brothers' father and grandmother have been missing from their home about five miles west of Union since the bank robbery there.

They were last seen on Nov. 12 by a friend in St. Louis.

The brothers' mother, Mrs. Dorothy E. Pardue, of Fairfield, Conn., is a secretary in a branch office of the State National Bank in Southport. The bank has been held up twice in recent months.

Danbury police have obtained warrants charging John Pardue with robbery with violence, the use of explosives to injure persons and property and carrying a pistol without a permit.

His brother, James, is named in Third Circuit Court warrants on charges of robbery with violence and

Continued on Page 3

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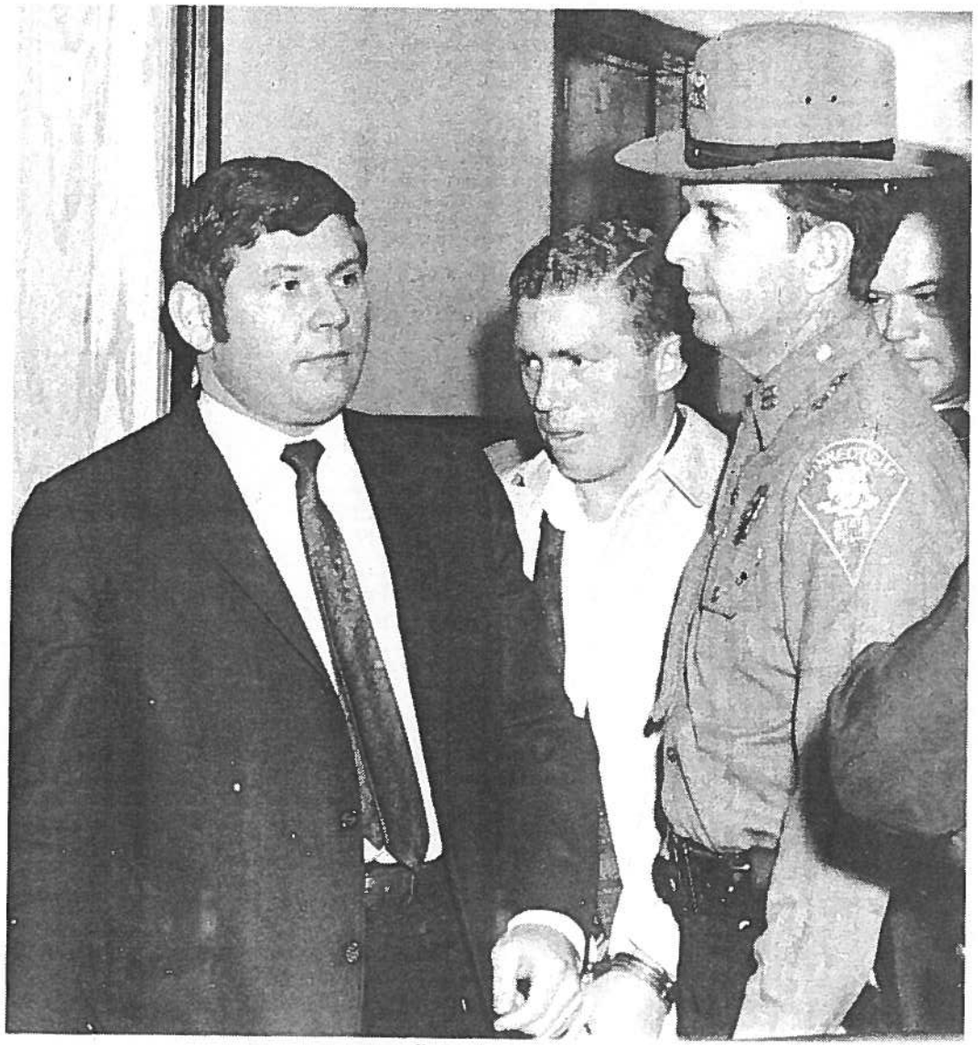


Bank robbery suspect

John Russell Pardue, (center) 27, of 13 Crane St., is led out of the Danbury War Memorial by federal and state police following his arraignment before U.S. Commissioner Arthur Latimer Saturday. Pardue is being held in lieu of $250,000 bond on federal bank robbery charges. (News-Times—West)

3-9-70

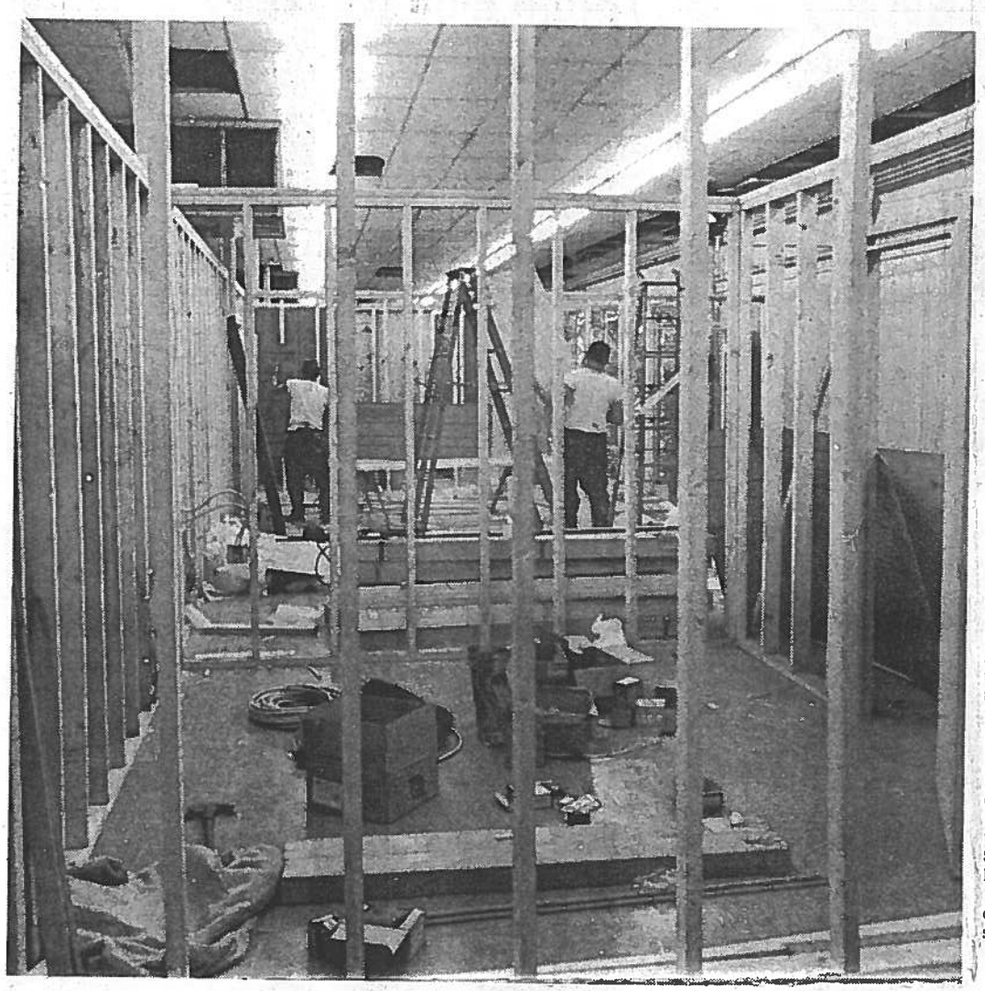
Bomb suspect lived here

This two and one-half story wood-frame house at 13 Crane St., owned by Max Barry of Danbury, had been rented for the past 14 or 15 months by John Pardue, 27, one of the two brothers being held in connection with the Union Savings Bank robbery and the bombing of Danbury police headquarters, the bank, and a car outside the Danbury Mall on Feb. 13. (News-Times — Brooks)

The News-Times

NEWS-TIMES, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 1970

$600,000 authorized for police station



Police quarters by the weekend?

The former A & P supermarket remodeling continues, to provide a temporary police headquarters. The building, being leased from the Dolan Co., is diagonally across from the bombed out headquarters building, and police are scheduled to move in this weekend. (News-Times—Brooks)

DANBURY — Expenditure of $600,000 toward a new police station to replace the one damaged in an explosion Feb. 13 was approved unanimously by the common council at a special meeting last night.

Although plans for the building have not been drawn, Mayor Gino J. Arconti told the 17 councilmen he expected to construct a two-story building of 12,000 to 15,000 square feet on the site of the former police headquarters.

Funding for the new building has not been determined, but the mayor said he planned to use $300,000 of the $376,022 insurance settlement so far on the building for the project. The rest of the settlement will be needed for the temporary police headquarters being established in the former A & P store on Main Street.

In addition, Arconti said, $225,000 in unanticipated revenue would be set aside for the project. The money, the mayor explained, was received primarily through state grants which had not been anticipated in the 1969-1970 budget.

"These funds," the mayor told councilman Norman Winnerman, who requested an explanation of the financing, "would have been surplus and would have been used to reduce the tax levy if we hadn't found ourselves in the current situation."

The remaining money for the building, the mayor said, would come from the fund set up for a new headquarters and from interest raised on these sums.

There is no estimate on what this will total, but Arconti said he had set $600,000 as a ceiling in order to have latitude in planning.

The approved ordinance amends the current capital budget to add the police station as a public works project and estimates operating and maintenance costs of the building at $1,127,813 a year.

Arconti noted this estimate is required when approving a new building and was based on an estimated police budget for a year.

The actual size of the building, Arconti said, could not be determined until he and Police Chief William Tobin sit down with architects to determine needs for the building and to look at designs. Once the architects estimate square foot costs, he said, the size of the building would be determined by the funds available.

The mayor said he hoped to build as large a station as possible with the money available. He predicted a 12,000-square-foot building would be sufficient for 20 years, while a 15,000-square-foot building would hold up for 25 years or more.

In any case, Arconti said, plans would take into account future expansion needs. The ground floor, he predicted, would cover 10,000 square feet with additional space on the second floor.

This would leave from 5,000 to 8,000 square feet of space for second floor expansion.

In response to a question from Councilman Roy Costa, Arconti said the building would be built on the same foundation as the former building and not closer to the street.

If another site was selected, he said, the insurance settlement would decrease since the building no longer would be a "replacement."

Councilman Roy Swenson, who questioned the need for immediate authorization of funds, said he was on the point of asking that the matter be referred to a council committee.

"Time is of the essence," the mayor replied, "and leasing is expensive. Police activity requires a good facility and good equipment and while the temporary arrangement will suffice, it's not what we need."

Swenson said he agreed that the project was urgent, but questioned whether the appropriation was needed immediately. He suggested the council needed a month to decide what it wanted and make sure the project met those needs and asked how this would cause a delay.

Arconti replied such a move would delay work by the architects, but admitted that design work could be completed for about $8,000. But, he added, "there is no need to delay; the time for action is now."

The mayor noted that if bids are received which show that a building cannot be constructed for $600,000, work would be stopped and the council consulted again.

Arconti said he hoped to have plans completed, bids let and construction started within four months. The first step, he added, would be consultations with the architects to prepare plans which he estimated would take over a month.

Councilman Vittell Walkovich noted the support of citizens who have come forward in the last few weeks to offer assistance despite the fact they are contributing to a municipal project supported by taxes.

"If they feel we need a police station this badly," he said, "then we should pass this tonight."

The councilmen also approved a resolution authorizing an application for state funds for the demolition of the damaged building. Shortly after the explosion, state Department of Community Affairs representatives promised the mayor up to $10,000 would be made available for demolition.

The News-Time
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 1970

News-Times — Ross

All fall down

The last of the old police station was demolished by a wrecking crane yesterday. Capazziello Bros. Inc., of Bridgeport, is handling the demolition of the building, damaged by a bomb during a bank robbery Feb. 13. Police are located in temporary headquarters across the street from the site.

5-13-70

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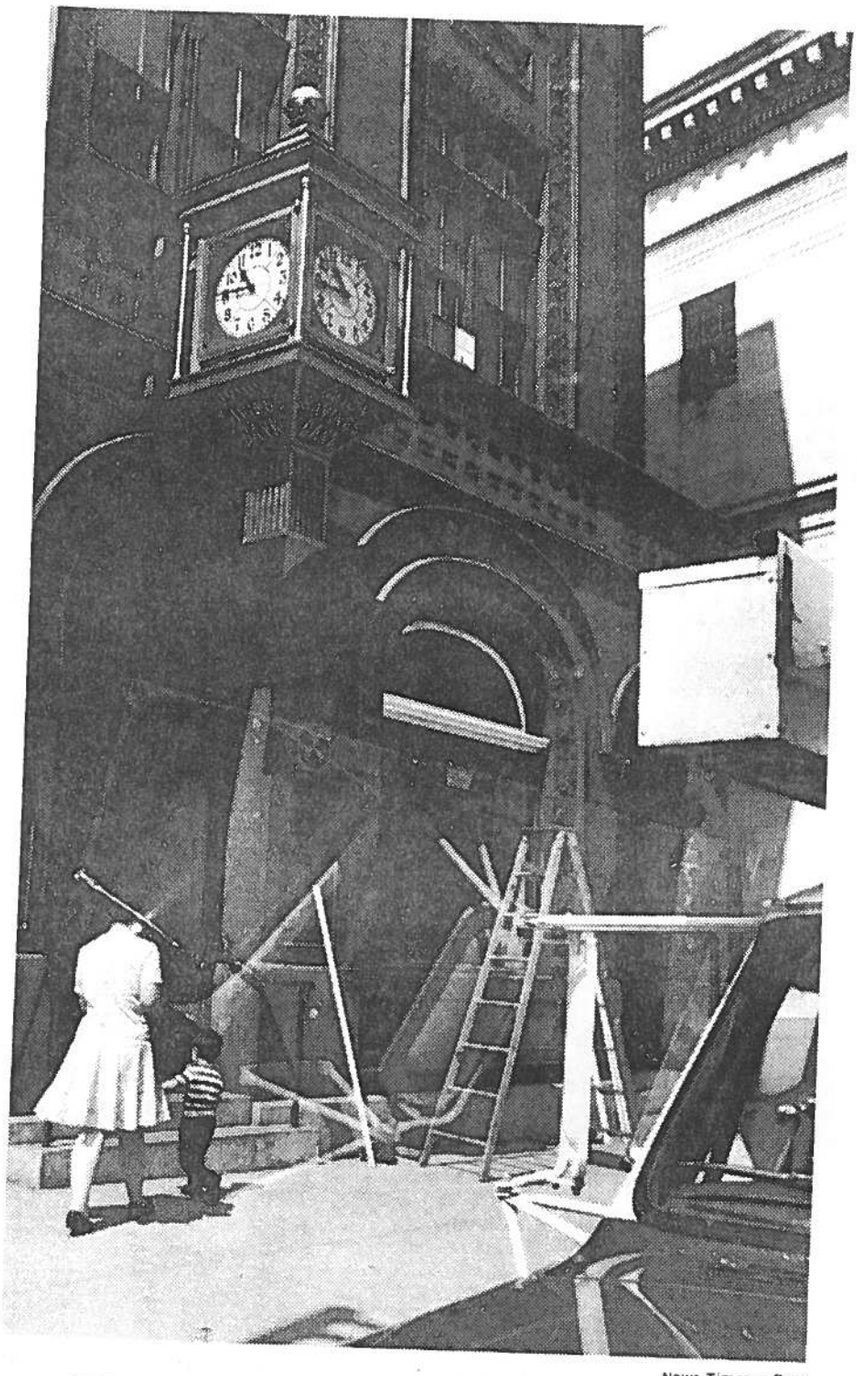
Vol. 87, No. 114 15c Daily at Newsstand



News-Times — Ross

Through a glass lightly

A little financier and his mother are seen through plate window glass as they enter the Union Savings Bank at 226 Main St. in Danbury yesterday, as workmen install the final window in the building ripped by an explosion after a $26,365 bank robbery on Feb. 13.

The News-Times
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1971

3 explosions rocked Danbury a year ago

News-Times—Brooks

Like it is

One year after the explosion that gutted the former Danbury police station at Main and Boughton Streets, workmen continue construction of the new statio being built on the same site.

News-Times—Brooks

Like it was

Police and firemen search through the ruins in the demolished first-floor hallway of the former police station on Main Street two hours after it was shattered by a bomb-blast last Feb. 13.

p. 1/2

ws-Times

FEBRUARY 13, 1971

Danbury a year ago

By GARY THOMPSON

DANBURY — Friday the 13th dawned cold, clear and quiet one year ago today.

The temperature rose to the mid-20's by 10:30 a.m., but a brisk northwest wind neutralized the warming rays of the bright winter sun.

Off-duty patrolmen, some accompanied by their wives and children, filtered in and out of the Main Street police station picking up their paychecks.

Two prisoners sat quietly in a basement cell awaiting their arraignment that morning in Third Circuit Court, just two blocks away.

At 10:41 a.m., a patrolman began writing out a ticket for a car parked illegally in front of the three and one-half story police station.

He didn't finish.

Seconds later, a terrific explosion showered the patrolman with shards of glass from windows blown out of their frames.

The force of the blast knocked the patrolman across the hood of the car. He regained his footing, spun around and saw clouds of dust and debris billowing from the building.

The front doors of the station were blown off their hinges and lying on the ground near the sidewalk. Water from shattered pipes sprayed out of the front door.

A dazed woman from a third-floor board of education office climbed out on a window ledge, crying quietly. The deputy police chief, who had run out of the building seconds earlier after hearing a strange "hissing" sound, was slowly getting to his feet on the debris-littered front lawn after being knocked down by the blast.

A patrolman just climbing into a police car in the parking lot behind the station was momentarily stunned by the blast, then started running toward the building.

Inside the shattered station, a city detective, blood streaming from cuts on his face, stumbled through the littered basement hallway toward the Boughton Street exit.

A police captain, his back to the main hallway, was noting entries in an arrest book when the building erupted behind him.

The blast knocked him across a counter. As he got up, the captain noticed a woman secretary slumped face-down at her desk.

A sergeant and another secretary, both cut by flying glass, stunned by the explosion and covered with a layer of fine white dust, staggered toward the rear of the building.

The captain revived the unconscious secretary and all four persons climbed out a rear window onto a fire escape.

A state police sergeant, riding along Main Street in his patrol car, stared with unbelieving eyes at the exploding station.

He quickly radioed the Ridgefield State Police Barracks, which in turn notified headquarters in Hartford. Within minutes, state police-manned roadblocks were set up on major roads leading into and out of Danbury.

The lieutenant in command of the Ridgefield Barracks raced to his car at the first message of the explosion and headed for Danbury, as did state police units from headquarters and other parts of the state.

Meanwhile, police, passersby and employes of nearby businesses were helping the injured out of the building.

The two dazed prisoners were dug out of their cell and pitched in to help rescue the injured. A detective probing through the darkened, wrecked first-floor hallway fell through a gaping hole blasted in the floor by the explosion.

Miraculously, no one was killed or seriously injured, although some still wear scars a year later.

Fire department men and equipment sped toward the station as rumors spread that a gas main had exploded. Those rumors proved false.

Two minutes after the blast at the police station, two unmasked gunmen walked calmly into the Union Savings Bank just three blocks away.

As they came through the door, the gunmen didn't notice a bank clerk step on an alarm that was hooked up to a sounding system at police head quarters.

But the clerk couldn't know that the system — and headquarters itself — was blown out of commission just minutes before. The alarm went unanswered.

The two gunmen herded bank customers and employes alike into a back room and ordered them to lie on the floor.

A bank officer heard the terse command as he talked over the phone to a probate judge in an office above the bank.

The judge hung up the phone and hurriedly called state police.

Downstairs, the two robbers were busy stuffing money from the cashiers' cages into a canvas bag they had carried into the bank.

Another customer entered and was ordered to lie on the floor behind the main counter.

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Two police officers, directed to the parking lot by the attorney, were unable to spot the robbers and returned to the street to direct traffic and rescue operations.

The two gunmen escaped with $26,365 in cash and about $20,000 in blank traveler's checks, police reported.

Ten minutes after the first explosion, a mobile police headquarters was established in the Civil Defense office at the Danbury War Memorial.

At 11 a.m., just 19 minutes after the first blast, third explosion ripped apart an empty auto in the Danbury Mall parking lot.

The final blast heavily damaged two cars parked near the demolished auto and shattered windows on doors leading into the shopping center.

The description of the bandits' getaway car matched the description of the auto demolished in the Mall parking lot. The car roof was found days later atop the Mall roof, some 50 feet high and 75 feet away from the car.

Many persons still clung to the belief that gas mains exploding had led to the destruction. Some schools were closed in fear of further explosions.

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The hospital went into a disaster alert status and doctors were summoned from their homes. But the final count disclosed that — almost unbelievably — only 26 persons were injured, none seriously, in the three explosions.

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Mayor Gino J. Arconti was able to snatch only a few hours of sleep that weekend as he directed the city functions and operations and urged residents to remain calm.

A hectic weekend of investigation and cleanup followed. The bank reopened for business the following Monday and police set up a temporary headquarters at the War Memorial.

An intensive three-week investigation was culminated on March 7 with the arrest of two brothers, one a Danbury man, on federal bank robbery charges.

John Russell Pardue Jr., 28, formerly of 13 Crane St., will stand trial for the robbery and bombings beginning March 9 after more than a year of legal delays and maneuvers.

His brother, James Peter Pardue, 24, formerly of Lusby, Md., was declared mentally incompetent to stand trial and is currently incarcerated at a federal mental hospital in Missouri.

The trial holds special interest to those who remember Friday the 13th with something less than nostalgia.

N-T P. 2/2

The News-Times
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1971

3 explosions rocked Danbury a year ago

News-Times—Brooks

Like it is

One year after the explosion that gutted the former Danbury police station at Main and Boughton Streets, workmen continue con truction of the new station being built on the same site.

By GARY THOMPSON

DANBURY — Friday the 13th dawned cold, clear and quiet one year ago today.

The temperature rose to the mid-20's by 10:30 a.m., but a brisk northwest wind neutralized the warming rays of the bright winter sun.

Off-duty patrolmen, some accompanied by their wives and children, filtered in and out of the Main Street police station picking up their paychecks.

Two prisoners sat quietly in a basement cell awaiting their arraignment that morning in Third Circuit Court, just two blocks away.

At 10:41 a.m., a patrolman began writing out a ticket for a car parked illegally in front of the three and one-half story police station.

He didn't finish.

Seconds later, a terrific explosion showered the patrolman with shards of glass from windows blown out of their frames.

The force of the blast knocked the patrolman across the hood of the car. He regained his footing, spun around and saw clouds of dust and debris billowing from the building.

The front doors of the station were blown off their hinges and lying on the ground near the sidewalk. Water from shattered pipes sprayed out of the front door.

A dazed woman from a third-floor board of education office climbed out on a window ledge, crying quietly. The deputy police chief, who had run out of the building seconds earlier after hearing a strange "hissing" sound, was slowly getting to his feet on the debris-littered front lawn after being knocked down by the blast.

A patrolman just climbing into a police car in the parking lot behind the station was momentarily stunned by the blast, then started running toward the building.

Inside the shattered station, a city detective, blood streaming from cuts on his face, stumbled through the littered basement hallway toward the Boughton Street exit.

A police captain, his back to the main hallway, was noting entries in an arrest book when the building erupted behind him.

notified headquarters in Hartford. Within minutes, state police-manned roadblocks were set up on major roads leading into and out of Danbury.

The lieutenant in command of the Ridgefield Barracks raced to his car at the first message of the explosion and headed for Danbury, as did state police units from headquarters and other parts of the state.

Meanwhile, police, passersby and employes of nearby businesses were helping the injured out of the building.

The two dazed prisoners were dug out of their cell and pitched in to help rescue the injured. A detective probing through the darkened, wrecked first-floor hallway fell through a gaping hole blasted in the floor by the explosion.

Miraculously, no one was killed or seriously injured, although some still wear scars a year later.

Fire department men and equipment sped toward the station as rumors spread that a gas main had exploded. Those rumors proved false.

Two minutes after the blast at the police station, two unmasked gunmen walked calmly into the Union Savings Bank just three blocks away.

As they came through the door, the gunmen didn't notice a bank clerk step on an alarm that was hooked up to a sounding system at police head quarters.

But the clerk couldn't know that the system — and headquarters itself — was blown out of commission just minutes before. The alarm went unanswered.

The two gunmen herded bank customers and employes alike into a back room and ordered them to lie on the floor.

A bank officer heard the terse command as he talked over the phone to a probate judge in an office above the bank.

The judge hung up the phone and hurriedly called state police.

Downstairs, the two robbers were busy stuffing money from the cashiers' cages into a canvas bag they had carried into the bank.

Another customer entered and was ordered to lie on the floor behind the main counter.

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News-Times—Brooks

Like it is

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News-Times—Brooks

Like it was

Police and firemen search through the ruins in the demolished first-floor hallway of the former police station on Main Street two hours after it was shattered by a bomb-blast last Feb. 13.

Seconds later, a terrific explosion showered the patrolman with shards of glass from windows blown out of their frames.

The force of the blast knocked the patrolman across the hood of the car. He regained his footing, spun around and saw clouds of dust and debris billowing from the building.

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A police captain, his back to the main hallway, was noting entries in an arrest book when the building erupted behind him.

The blast knocked him across a counter. As he got up, the captain noticed a woman secretary slumped face-down at her desk.

A sergeant and another secretary, both cut by flying glass, stunned by the explosion and covered with a layer of fine white dust, staggered toward the rear of the building.

The captain revived the unconscious secretary and all four persons climbed out a rear window onto a fire escape.

A state police sergeant, riding along Main Street in his patrol car, stared with unbelieving eyes at the exploding station.

He quickly radioed the Ridgefield State Police Barracks, which in turn wear scars a year later.

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The News-Times

Vol. 88, No. 83 | 15c Daily at Newsstand | Danbury, Conn. 06810, Thursday, April 8, 1971 | Phone 744-5100

Pardue shot at court

Wife smuggles gun

By GARY THOMPSON

BRIDGEPORT — John Russell Pardue Jr. was shot three times at the U.S. marshal's office in the federal court house here.

Reliable sources at the court house said that his wife, Nancy, had smuggled a sawed-off .308 rifle to him and that a marshal had shot him as he pointed the weapon.

Pardue was on trial for the Feb. 13, 1970 robbery of the Union Savings Bank and the associated bombings of the bank, the Danbury police station and the alleged getaway car in the Danbury Mall.

Witnesses gave the following account:

After his wife's visit, three U.S. marshals and one court house guard prepared to take Pardue upstairs to the courtroom.

As they approached Pardue's open cell door, he leveled a rifle at U.S. Marshal Anthony Diorenzo Jr. and commanded "Stay where you are!"

Diorenzo drew his revolver and fired five shots at Pardue, hitting him three times, twice in the chest and once in an arm.

Pardue was rushed to Park City Hospital where he was undergoing emergency surgery.

Danbury Police Chief William F. Tobin, Detective Lt. Nelson Macedo and Det. Joseph, who were waiting in the U.S. attorney's office on the third floor to testify, heard the shots and raced to the marshal's office.

Pardue, lying on the cell floor, moaned and occasionally gasped: "Water, water..."

His wife, who was free on a $50,000 bond after being charged with a previous attempt to smuggle a gun to Pardue while he was in jail, was found in a parked car with the motor running about two blocks from the federal court house. She was taken into custody.

Theodore Koskoff, one of the defense attorneys, said this morning: "I've never abandoned a case in my life and I don't intend to now. The trial was going well. This seems like the act of an irrational guy."

Judge Robert C. Zampano told the jury this morning: "An unfortunate incident has occurred. Someone smuggled a weapon into Mr. Pardue. He was shot by U.S. marshals while trying to escape. You are dismissed."

Witnesses at the marshal's office said that Pardue didn't fire a shot.

Park City Hospital refused to comment on his condition at noon, saying he was still in the emergency room.

Today's incident was the latest in the bizarre case following the Feb. 13, 1970 bank robbery of the Union Savings Bank and the bombing of the bank, the Danbury police station and the alleged getaway car in the Danbury Mall.

—At 10:41 a.m., on Feb. 13, 1970 — an explosion rocked the Danbury police station.

Two minutes later two unmasked gunmen walked into the Union Savings Bank, three blocks away on Main Street. Although a clerk sounded the alarm, it didn't register at the police department. The sound system there had been blown out with the explosion.

The gunmen herded customers and employes into a back room and made them lie on the floor. The robbers stuffed money from the cashiers' cages into a canvas bag they brought with them. Then they ran from the bank.

Seconds later, an explosion ripped through the bank, blowing out windows and wrecking walls and ceiling.

The two gunmen escaped with $26,000 in cash, and $20,000 in blank traveller's checks, police said.

At 11 a.m., 19 minutes after the first explosion, a third blast blew apart an empty automobile in the Danbury Mall parking lot. The car roof was found on top of the Mall roof several days later. The roof is 50 feet high, and the building 75 feet from where the car was parked.

A total of 26 persons was injured in the three blasts, none seriously.

The search for the robbers began, with Federal Bureau of Investigation agents joining forces with Danbury police.

After a three-week investigation, the two Pardue brothers were arrested. One, James Peter Pardue, 24, formerly of Lusby, Md., was declared mentally incompetent to stand trial and incarcerated at a federal mental hospital in Missouri.

The other, John Russell Pardue Jr., 28, formerly of 13 Crane St., Danbury, stood trial which began March 9.

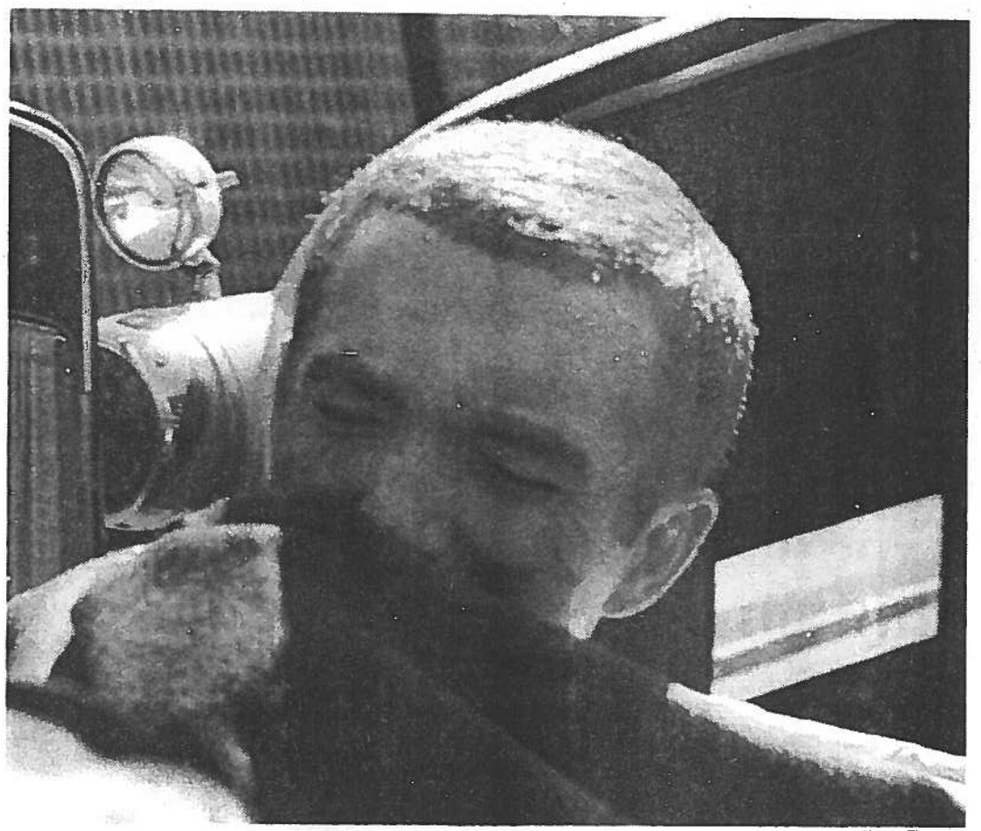
Missouri police also investigated the possibility the brothers were involved in the disappearance of their father and grandmother, Mrs. Daisy Pardue, 79, both of Union, Mo.

Franklin County Sheriff William Miller speculated the brothers were involved in a Nov. 13, 1969, robbery of

Continued on Page 8

Forecast

Sunny and milder tomorrow
High yesterday 51, low today 28
(Map, other details on Page 8)



News-Times—Thompson

Wounded defendant

John Russell Pardue Jr. is wheeled to an ambulance after a U.S. marshal shot him this morning at the U.S. court house in Bridgeport. He was attempting to escape with a gun his wife had smuggled him.

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APRIL 8, 1971

News-Times—Thompson

Where shooting took place

U.S. court house in Bridgeport, scene of escape attempt this morning by John Russell Pardue Jr. He was shot by a marshal.

Pardue shot in escape attempt

Continued from Page 1

$18,000 from the United Bank of Union. The robbers struck minutes after a bomb exploded in the Franklin County courthouse, wrecking the sheriff's communications center.

Miller said his office was investigating the possibility the brothers robbed the bank, then holed up at the father's home, five miles west of Union.

The father and grandmother have been missing since the robbery. Miller said it looked like the house had been abandoned in a hurry.

And FBI agent Charles Weekes said: "We are definitely investigating possible tie-ins with other robberies."

The description of the robbers also matched that of two men who robbed a Pacific, Mo., bank of $80,000, in May, 1969, police said.

Pardue's mother, Mrs. Dorothy Pardue, lives at 2 Fawn Ridge Road, Fairfield.

John Pardue is charged with the Feb. 13, 1970, bank robbery of $26,365 from the Union Savings Bank of Danbury, bombing the bank and transporting explosives across state lines.

He and his brother also were charged with bombing the Danbury police station and their alleged getaway car in the Danbury Mall parking lot.

But three counts of the original six-count indictment against John have been dropped because of "overlapping" charges.

James will remain in the mental hospital in Missouri until he is able to stand trial or until the charges are dropped.

Mrs. Nancy Pardue has been out on a $50,000 bond after being charged with attempting to help her husband, John, escape by smuggling a gun while he was in jail awaiting trial.

The suspect is represented by the father-son defense attorneys of Theodore and Michael Koskoff of Bridgeport. Asst. U.S. Attorneys Leslie Byelas and Mac Buckley are prosecuting the case for the government.

The government has attempted to establish as fact the following:

—That Pardue flew into Seattle, Wash., Feb. 6, 1971, just seven days before the bombings and bank robbery in Danbury.

—That once there, he made three telephone calls to an employe of an explosives distributing company in Idaho and ordered certain explosives.

—That, after making a bus trip from Seattle to Spokane, Wash., he called another explosives company employe early the next morning and arranged to meet with him and pick up the explosives.

—That Pardue rented a car and drove from Spokane to the company plant located about 25 miles from property he owned near Cataldo, Idaho.

—That he purchased 50 pounds of dynamite and 25 blasting caps with an 8.5 second delay mechanism from the explosives distributor.

—That although Pardue had purchased a total of about 150 pounds of dynamite from the company during a five months period, only 75 pounds were found in an FBI-directed search of the Pardue property on March 8, 1970.

—That none of the blasting caps Pardue bought on Feb. 7 were found and that there was no evidence of blasting at the Pardue property.

The defense contends that Pardue bought the explosives to clear timber and rocks from the property.

He bought the dynamite, they say, on the advice of the explosives salesman — that dynamite should be used as a primer for high-explosive nitrate powder that is recommended for use in clearing property.

The two brothers were indicted in March of 1970 and John's trial started last March 17, when a 12-member jury was chosen.

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P. 2/2. 4-8-71

-Times

April 28, 1971 Phone 744-5100

News-Times—Brooks

Air ambulance

John Russell Pardue, accused of a Feb. 13, 1970 bank robbery and a series of bombings in Danbury, rides a stretcher into an Air Force Medical plane at Tweed-New Haven Airport from where he was flown to Springfield, Mo. yesterday afternoon.

Pardue transferred to Missouri hospital

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. — John Russell Pardue Jr. has been transferred from Connecticut to a hospital here, where he was in critical condition this morning.

Pardue, 28, who was shot in an escape attempt from the Bridgeport, Conn., federal courthouse where he was on trial for bombings and a bank robbery in Danbury, was flown here from Tweed-New Haven Airport yesterday afternoon.

An ambulance took him from Bridgeport Hospital to the New Haven airport. He was flown on an Air Force plane with two doctors on board.

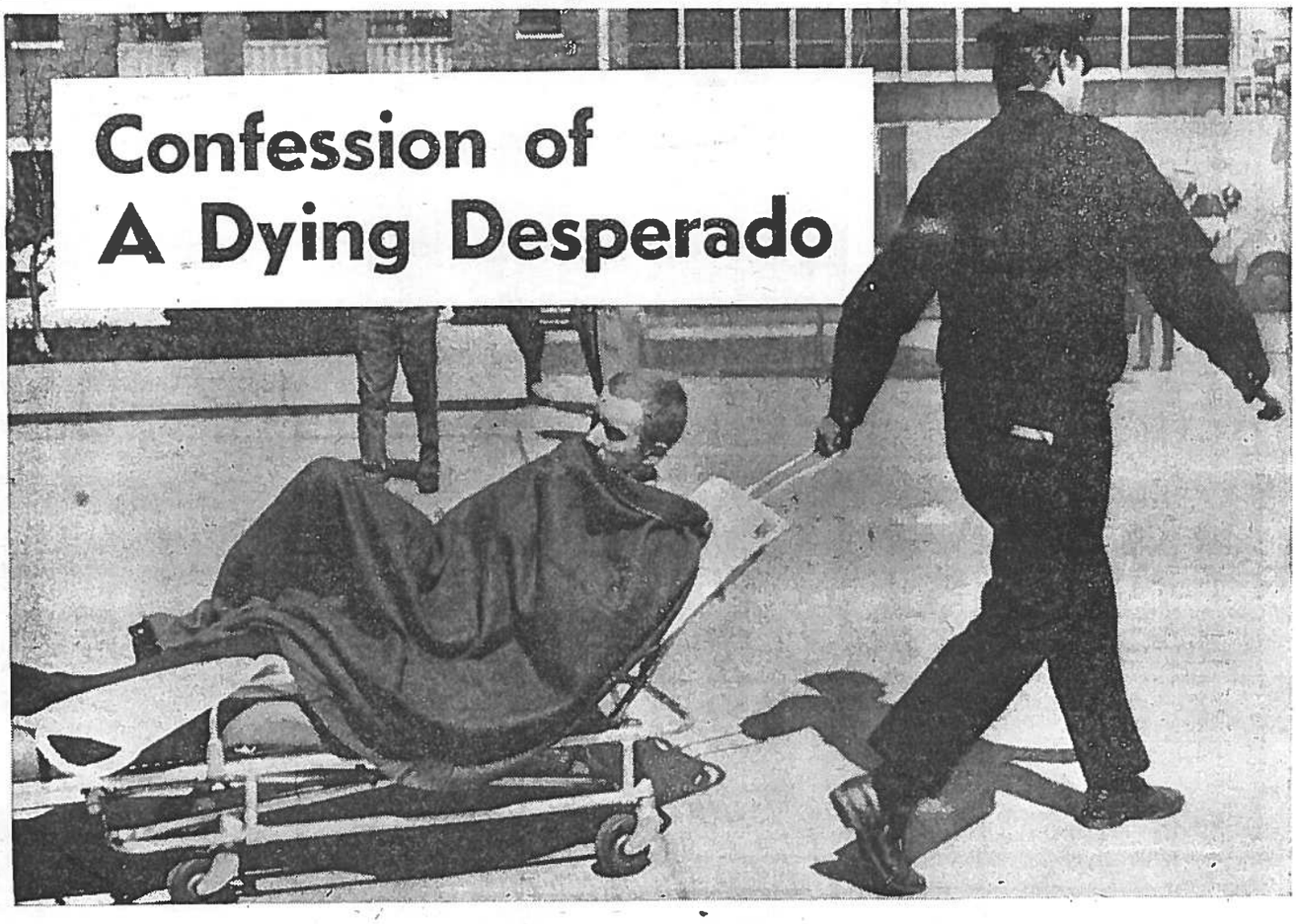
He was to have been taken to the Federal Medical Center here but began bleeding profusely in flight and was taken to the Cox Medical Center and put on a kidney cleansing machine. The Federal Medical Center doesn't have such equipment.

Pardue's transfer to Missouri followed a series of complications after surgery for removal of the bullets. He underwent surgery for a gastric ulcer and recently developed kidney trouble, reportedly the result of a gunshot wound. He was transferred from Park City Hospital in Bridgeport to Bridgeport Hospital Sunday night so he could be placed on a kidney dialysis machine.

Pardue and his brother, James, 23, are charged with the Feb. 13, 1970, robbery of the Union Savings Bank in Danbury and three bombings which police said were planned to divert attention from the robbery.

James Pardue has been found mentally incompetent to stand trial and is a patient at the Federal Center here.

Confession of A Dying Desperado



By KERMIT JAEDIKER

N A DETENTION CELL on the third floor of the U.S. Courthouse in Bridgeport, Conn., an accused bank bandit named John Russell Pardue Jr. eagerly awaited the arrival of his wife. She was coming with a gift for him—the beautiful, but possibly bloody, gift of freedom.

Pardue didn't look like a bank bandit. The adjective "clean-cut" seemed invented just for him. He was 28 and had a nice build. He had blond hair cut short and his blue eyes were deceptively gentle.

The time was 9:30 a.m. this past April 8. Within half an hour, Pardue was scheduled to be escorted one flight up to Federal District Court. He was being tried there on charges of pulling Connecticut's most explosive—and we mean explosive—bank robbery.

On Feb. 13, 1970, a bomb blew up in the three-story brick police headquarters of Danbury, a city of 50,000 population 63 miles from New York. The blast badly shattered the building, injured 26 persons and knocked out the police communications system — phones, radio and the alarm system connected with the city's banks.

A 15-minute electronic silence befell headquarters and under its protective cover two men stuck up the Union Savings Bank three blocks away, seized $26,365 and, as they fled, heaved a small bomb that blew out the bank's front windows. They used a third bomb to destroy their station wagon, then switched to another car and escaped. But a month later, the law caught up with two prime suspects—Pardue and his brother, James, 23, dark and stocky.

From the very start, investigators had suspected the robbers were "military-trained demolition men." As it turned out, both the Pardues were ex-servicemen and, what's more, John, a former marine, had been a demolition expert.

The Pardue brothers came from St. Louis. The family moved to Connecticut, where the boys quickly evinced a keen interest in outdoor sport. They were arrested for shooting sea gulls in a town park. Later, John went in for bigger game—police said he fired some shots at his father.

Pop himself was accused of pegging a shot at his wife in 1965. In time, the parents broke up and John Sr., an oil company engineer, trekked back to Missouri.

His sons evidently moved to Missouri, for a spell anyway, because not long after their capture for the Danbury bank heist, James was indicted for two 1969 bank holdups in Missouri and authorities strongly suspected his brother of also being involved in them.

Interestingly enough, a stratagem similar to the bombing in Danbury was employed in the second of the Missouri bank heists, which occurred in Union. The bank was stuck up minutes after a bomb blew up in the Franklin County Courthouse, wrecking the sheriff's communications center.

LTHOUGH the Missouri robberies preceded the Danbury raid, it was decided Connecticut would get first crack at the Pardue brothers.

Even as plans were being made for their trial, another inquiry involving the Pardue family came to light. It developed that the brothers' father, who was 53, and grandmother, Daisy Link Pardue, who was 79, were mysteriously missing from their farm home, five miles west of Union.

The Pardue brothers were indicted in the Danbury affair on six counts and, if convicted, faced 115 years each in prison. However, James got off the hook in that one, temporarily at least, when he was adjudged insane and incompetent to stand trial and was lodged in a mental hospital in Missouri.

John also wanted to get off the hook, but in his own fashion. On April 11, 1970, his slim and pretty brunette wife, Nancy, 24, was arrested on a charge of trying to smuggle a .45 automatic and three clips of ammunition into her husband's cell at the Bridgeport Correctional Center. She was later freed in bail.

John didn't give up easily. Authorities said he subsequently tried to bribe a guard with $5,000 to smuggle a gun to him. That didn't work, so he offered $10,000 to another guard, but that didn't work either.

Shortly after being fatally shot while attempting courthouse escape, John Pardue Jr. was removed to a Bridgeport, Conn., hospital (A). He unburdened secret details of his life of crime to the FBI.

A Justice Story

James Pardue (←), John's brother, faces trial in the bombing of the Danbury, Conn., police station and the Union Savings Bank. He is also under indictment in two bank robberies in Missouri.

This gets us to 9:30 a.m., this past April 8, the U.S. marshal's office on the third floor of the U.S. courthouse in Bridgeport and John Russell Pardue in one of two detention cells there, waiting for Nancy to come. He'd been brought to the cell a little earlier from the Correctional Center.

Upstairs in the courtroom the lawyers were getting ready for another session of Pardue's trial, already in its fourth week. The prosecution was being conducted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Leslie Byelas and F. Mac Buckley Counsel for the defense were Theodore Koskoff and his son, Michael.

Outside the courthouse, only two doors away, a car moved into a space in the parking lot of the Holiday Inn and stopped. In the car were Pardue's wife, Nancy, and their baby daughter, slightly over 1 year. The vehicle also contained bullets, a change of clothing for a man and Pardue's passport.

Leaving the baby in the auto, Nancy Pardue made her way to the courthouse. She wore a blouse and a miniskirt and, authorities add, a gun holster, concealed under her blouse, in an armpit. The holster contained a sawed-off rifle, 21 inches long.

The bullets in the gun were of .30 caliber and reportedly had hollowed-out noses, like dum-dum bullets. A dum-dum bullet, on hitting a man, spreads flat, and leaves a wicked hole.

Nancy ascended to the U.S. marshal's office and was permitted to go to her husband's detention cell. She stood outside it, but they had a nice cozy talk, through the cage's meshed wire. When she departed, the sawed-off rifle was no longer under her armpit; it had been slipped surreptitiously under the cage door.

Shortly before 10 a.m., Chief Deputy Marshal Anthony DiRienzo Jr. and his son, 19-year-old Anthony DiRienzo 3d, a university student working as a part-time government guard, opened the door to Pardue's cell. They were going to take him upstairs. At least they thought they were.

"Freeze!" said Pardue. He was holding the smuggled rifle and it was pointed at the chief deputy marshal.

Young DiRienzo did some quick thinking. "I thought he was going to wipe us

Staring death in the face, John Pardue Jr. cleared up the murder of his father and grandmother, and five bank holdups

Clean-cut John Pardue (→) had eyes deceptively gentle. Behind them was a violence-prone disposition that caused his death and the imprisonment of his wife.

Pleading guilty to smuggling a gun to her husband, Nancy Pardue, described as a "nice, ordinary girl," said: "I guess I went about it all wrong." She was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

all out," he was to explain later. "I slowly slipped my hands down my chest to where my revolver was tucked in my waistband, grabbed the weapon, cocked it and opened fire."

He fired five shots and three of the bullets plowed into Pardue. Pardue fell to the floor and gasped: "I wouldn't have shot you."

Someone called for an ambulance. When word of the shooting reached the courtroom, Judge Robert C. Zampano, acting on a motion by both prosecution and defense, declared a mistrial.

Marshals and FBI agents, who at once suspected Nancy of smuggling the gun, tried to cover all exits in an effort to seal off the building, but she wasn't there. When they instituted a search of the premises outside, they found her seated with the baby in the car, whose engine was running, presumably in preparation for Pardue's getaway. She was promptly arrested.

PARDUE was removed to a hospital. Some time later he was flown to Springfield, Mo., for further treatment at a federal prison hospital.

He died as a result of his wounds April 29. A fortnight later, the FBI announced that while Pardue was under treatment in Connecticut he made a "dying declaration" in which he confessed participation in five bank holdups and involvement in at least four murders—including the killing of his father and grandmother.

Pardue, the FBI said, implicated himself and a "confederate" in all the crimes, including the $80,000 robbery of the Citizens Bank in Pacific, Mo., on May 9, 1969, and the $18,000 heist of the United Bank of Union, Mo., on Nov. 13 of the same year. While the "confederate" was not named, it was in connection with these two crimes that James Pardue was indicted.

There was a deadly prelude to the November holdup. Two days before it, according to Charles E. Weeks, special agent in charge of the FBI office in New Haven, the Pardue brothers' father and grandmother were slain, reportedly because the father objected to use of his farm as a hideout.

John Pardue assertedly pinned these two murders on his "confederate" but did admit he later helped bury the victims. A government source said that the bodies were put in a trailer and driven all the way to James Pardue's remote farm in Lusby, Md. At the time James was seized for the Danbury holdup, he gave Lusby as his home address but authorities then had no idea what was hidden there.

Following John's "deathbed" statement, which was oral, investigators went to Lusby and found two bodies under a two-ton cement floor in a shed. The dead, identified as Pardue Sr. and his mother, were wrapped in black plastic bags and both had died of gunshot wounds.

There was other banditry, other bloodletting, according to John's statement. On Aug. 17, 1968, William Hilliard, a New York State trooper, was forced at gunpoint into the trunk of his patrol car in Pound Ridge, N.Y. Then the robbers used the police car in the $22,000 stickup of the Northern Westchester National Bank in Lewisboro, N.Y.

The car, with Hilliard still locked in the trunk, was abandoned in Connecticut. The trunk opened electrically as well as manually and Hilliard finally managed to free himself by crossing two wires.

John said that a third man was in on the Lewisboro job—Lee Polk—and added that Polk and a fourth man, Dick Gregory, participated in the Oct. 22, 1968 holdup of the Fairfield County Trust Co. in Georgetown, Conn. The name Gregory, by the way, turned out to be an alias for Richard Void, 28, of Stamford, Conn.

The Georgetown stickup yielded $39,752 and was linked with three murders. First of all, the getaway car was taken from William Artman, of Bridgeport, whose body was later found stuffed in the car's trunk. Artman's killing was attributed by Pardue to Polk and Gregory.

But they got theirs. The FBI reported:

"Pardue stated that Polk and Gregory were murdered by him and the other individual in Redding, Conn., and they were thereafter transported by them to Kent, Conn., where the bodies were covered by brush, soaked with gasoline and burned."

The obvious assumption would be that Pardue and his partner knocked off the other two so they wouldn't have to cut them in on the swag. But an authoritative source said that actually Void and Gregory wanted to pull more jobs with the other two, but Pardue wanted no part of them, so they were disposed of.

Finally, Pardue admitted he and his "confederate" pulled the bomb-studded Danbury stickup. Inasmuch as James had been charged with that crime, there seemed to remain little doubt who Pardue's associate in the other crimes was. But a government spokesman insisted that naming the so-called "confederate" would be pure speculation.

The FBI announcement of John Russell Pardue's "dying declaration" drew an angry comment from defense attorney Michael Koskoff.

"The FBI," he said, "requested permission from us to visit him and talk to him and we denied that permission. They went there [to the hospital] anyway, without our permission and behind our backs, and talked to him."

KOSKOFF expressed the opinion that the Pardue statement "would never have been admissible in court" because it was "unreliable." He said the wounded Pardue had "taken a tremendous amount of medication and was in a drugged condition and in very bad shape."

Meantime, on June 29, Nancy, accompanied by lawyer Nicholas Cioffi, appeared in U.S. District Court in Hartford, Conn., and pleaded guilty to five counts linking her with her husband's fatal escape attempt from the federal courthouse.

She admitted she and Pardue talked over the escape during her previous visits to his cell. When asked by Judge Thomas F. Murphy if she wasn't aware that there might be gunplay, she softly replied: "I didn't think anyone was going to be shot."

On Aug. 23, she was sentenced to five prison terms totaling 40 years, but since Judge Murphy ordered the terms served concurrently, her actual sentence adds up to 10 years.

"I just wanted to be with my husband and my baby," she told the court. "I guess I went about it all wrong."

A friend described Nancy as a "nice, ordinary girl, quiet and unassuming," who, following high school, worked as a stenographer.

"She never had any major problems," the friend added, "until she married Pardue. If she hadn't married him, I don't think she'd ever had gotten into trouble. If she'd married someone else, she'd have been like any other housewife—bringing up kids, running a home, having her worries, sure, but nothing like the trouble she's got now."

Patently, the conversion of Nancy Pardue into a desperado's helper was traceable to a single factor—love. But the metamorphosis of the Pardue brothers into desperadoes with a flair for blasting police communications evidently stemmed from a combination of things—their love of shooting, a streak of larceny, John's knowledge of demolitions, and quite possibly a legend.

Franklin County, Mo., where they assertedly first tried using explosives to successfully pull a bank robbery, is said to have been a favorite hideout for outlaws Jesse and Frank James nearly a century ago. While the James gang pulled its bank and train robberies elsewhere, they reportedly liked to lam for cover to Franklin County's huge, three-miles-long Meramec Caverns.

Policeman Ed Anderson looks at the blown-out windows of the bombed Danbury police station.

Significantly enough, a plan to knock out electrical communications to facilitate a bank stickup was cooked up by the James Brothers and the Youngers as far back as Sept. 7, 1887, when they raided the First National Bank in Northfield, Minn. They planned to wreck the telegraph office, thus preventing Northfield from summoning posses from neighboring towns.

But as the bank stickup was in progress, a merchant whose entry to the bank was barred by a gunman, threw a crimp into just about everything when he quickly retreated and then yelled, at the top of his lungs: "Get your guns, boys! They're robbing the bank!"

The citizens of Northfield got their guns, with such excellent effect that the James-Younger team fled. They fled so fast they completely forgot the plan to wreck the telegraph office. A large concentration of law was dispatched to the area and as a result, the gang suffered severe casualties.

Clearly the Pardue bombing of police communications in Connecticut and Missouri was a plagiarism, but it worked. For all that, both Pardues came to a sticky ending.

Sunday News 10-10-71 p. 2/2

The News-Times

Vol. 88, No. 113 | 15c Daily at Newsstand | Danbury, Conn. 06810, Thursday, May 13, 1971 | Phone 744-5100

Pardue's deathbed confession

FBI details his part in 4 murders

By GARY THOMPSON

NEW HAVEN — John Russell Pardue, by his own deathbed admission, participated in four murders and four bank robberies, the Federal Bureau of Investigation said today.

In releasing details of the confession, the FBI said the Danbury bank robbery suspect who died April 29 of gunshot wounds sustained in an escape attempt in Bridgeport admitted participation in the slayings of his father and grandmother and of two men whom he named as robbers of a bank at Georgetown and whose bodies were found on banks of the Housatonic River at Kent.

Pardue confessed to a part in four bank robberies in Connecticut, New York and Missouri, the FBI said.

But he was not questioned about the Feb. 13, 1970, bank robbery and bombings in Danbury because he was on trial for that crime when he was mortally wounded in the abortive escape attempt April 8.

A federal guard shot Pardue twice when the suspect pulled a sawed-off rifle on the guard's father, a deputy U.S. marshal, in the detention cell at the federal building in Bridgeport.

Critically wounded, Pardue underwent several emergency operations in ensuing days. But his doctors insisted Pardue could not recover and told the FBI he "could die at any time."

Pardue himself was "informed that his injuries were terminal," according to Charles E. Weeks, special agent in charge of the FBI in Connecticut.

Weeks said Pardue requested an interview with a specific FBI agent, insisting that the agent was the only man he could trust. Weeks declined to identify the agent.

For several days, the agent visited Pardue's heavily guarded room at Bridgeport Hospital. Pardue was unable to talk because of a tracheotomy performed to aid him in breathing, but apparently wrote out a dying declaration.

In his declaration, Weeks said, Pardue "involved himself and 'another person' in numerous crimes for which they had been under extensive active investigation."

"His statements confirmed in detail the investigative analyses of these activities which were made soon after their arrests on charges of bombing the Danbury police station and robbing and bombing the Union Savings Bank in Danbury on Feb. 13, 1970," Weeks continued.

Although the FBI declined to identify the "other person" named by Pardue, only two suspects were arrested for the Danbury bank robbery - John Pardue Jr. and his brother, James Peter Pardue, of Lusby, Md. James Pardue is in a federal prison hospital in Springfield, Mo. He was committed for mental incompetency.

According to Weeks, John Pardue "involved himself and 'the other person' in the following bank robberies:"

—The $22,268 holdup of the Vista, N.Y., branch of the former Northern Westchester National bank near New Canaan on Aug. 17, 1968.

—The $39,752 robbery of the Georgetown-Redding office of the former Fairfield County Trust Co. on Oct. 22, 1968.

—The $82,000 holdup of the Citizens' Bank of Pacific, Mo., on May 9, 1969.

—The $18,000 robbery of the United Bank of Union and the bombing of the Franklin County courthouse containing the sheriff's office and alarm system in Union, Mo., on Nov. 13, 1969.

"In addition," Weeks said, "Pardue

Continued on Page 8

Brooks

John Pardue
Day he was shot

Continued from Page 1

stated that one Lee Polk was also a participant in the Vista, N.Y., bank robbery and that Polk, as well as one Dick Gregory, was involved in the Georgetown bank robbery.

"Pardue stated that Polk and Gregory were murdered by him and 'the other individual' in Redding, Conn., and they were thereafter transported to Kent, Conn., where the bodies were covered by brush, soaked with gasoline and burned," Weeks continued.

The bodies of two unidentified men were found on a remote campsite along the Housatonic River in Kent on April 13, 1969. Both had been shot in the head.

Weeks said an "intensive investigation was conducted by the Connecticut State Police but identification of the bodies was hampered due to their charred condition and advanced state of decomposition."

Weeks said Pardue also "involved himself and 'the same person'" in the murders of his father, John Russell Pardue Sr., and his grandmother, Daisy Line Pardue, in Union, Mo. on Nov. 11, 1969, two days before the robbery of the bank there.

"Pardue claimed that 'the other person' killed his father and grandmother when the father objected to their using his farm as a hideout," Weeks said.

"The two bodies were then transported by them from Missouri to Lusby, Md., in the father's small utility trailer attached to the father's automobile.

"Pardue was able to draw a sketch map showing where the bodies were buried on a farm in Lusby, Md."

The farm was formerly owned by James Pardue. FBI agents found two bullet-riddled bodies buried beneath a two-ton slab of concrete on the farm during a search there on April 22. The map that Pardue drew led the agents to the bodies, Weeks said.

"In the Georgetown bank robbery," Weeks continued, Pardue claimed that Lee Polk and Dick Gregory killed William Artman, a 19-year-old Bridgeport youth, when he refused to give up his automobile which they sought for use as a getaway car in the robbery.

"Artman's body was subsequently found in the trunk of his car where it was abandoned a short time after the robbery."

Artman, who was shot in the head, was found in the trunk of a car abandoned about three-fourths of a mile from a house on Dayton Road in Redding where Pardue was living at the time.

An FBI spokesman said the investigation of all the crimes is continuing. He was unable to give the names and addresses of Polk and Gregory.

Pardue died April 29 after he was transferred to the Cox Medical Center in Springfield, Mo. His wife, 24-year-old Nancy Pardue, is being held at the Niantic State Farm for Women in lieu of $250,000 bond. She is charged with smuggling the sawed-off rifle into Pardue's dentention cell the morning he was shot.

P.1/2

Bomb saga maintains hold on city attention

By Ken Stack
News-Times staff

DANBURY — For the second year in a row, the saga of the Danbury bombings in which the police station was destroyed in connection with a robbery at the Union Savings Bank has, at least indirectly, led the list of major local stories.

What began in a violent shattering of the early morning hours of Feb. 13, 1970, resulted in violence again this year as John Russell Pardue was shot when he attempted to escape from the federal courthouse in Bridgeport where he was on trial in connection with the robbery and bombings.

Pardue's trial was in its third week when, after 10 courtroom appearances, including seven days of prosecution testimony, the defendant suddenly leveled a sawed-off rifle at a U.S. marshal approaching to escort him to the courtroom for resumption of the trial the morning of April 8.

The marshal's son, a part-time federal guard also in the escorting party, reacted instantly, shooting Pardue three times. Pardue died three weeks later after being transferred to a hospital in Missouri.

In August, Nancy Pardue, his widow, was convicted of assisting the escape by smuggling the rifle to him. She is serving a sentence in the Federal Penitentiary for Women in Alderson, W. Va.

Pardue's brother, James, also charged in connection with the Danbury incidents, has been found mentally incompetent to stand trial and has been committed to a state institution.

A final bizarre twist to the case was added by the FBI in May when it was announced Pardue had admitted, in a deathbed confession, participating in the Missouri murder of his father and grandmother, whose bodies were discovered in Maryland, and of two men whose bodies were discovered in Kent, Conn., in 1969, as well as four

awarded the 1971 Pulitzer Prize for general nonfiction for his book, "The Rising Sun, The Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire."

On the local level, voting machines came in for unusually heavy use even for a city election year. In three June-July referendums, voters rejected a new city charter and a revision of the tax formula while approving a compromise solution for the west side school site.

Even before the charter was formally presented to the common council in February after more than a year of work by the charter revision commission, it was apparent that the two groups were at loggerheads over the extent and philosophy of the changes the commission envisioned in a "strong mayor" form of government.

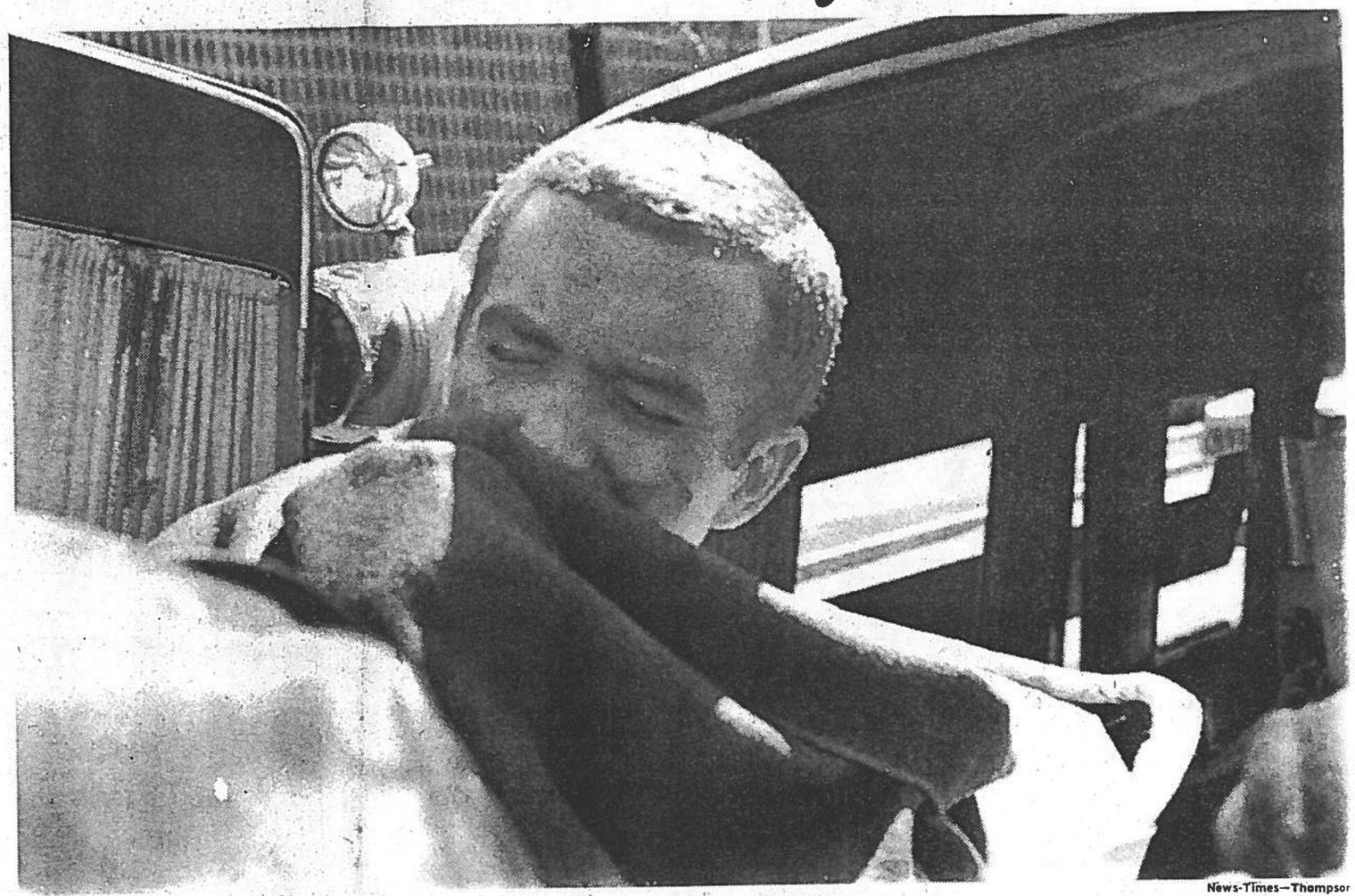
Complicating the issue as the council voted outright rejection of the new document in March was a corporation counsel ruling that four sections were illegal. After a petition drive forced the matter to a referendum vote, the charter was rejected by a two-to-one margin.

Before that problem had been settled, the council voted to revise the percentages for the three city tax rates while adopting a $20.7-million budget.

The result would have made a larger portion of the budget covered by all residents with a resulting increase in the basic rate paid by residents of primarily outlying, old-town areas. A citizens' drive successfully petitioned the change to a referendum. Only three weeks after the charter vote the tax plan too was overturned by a two-to-one margin.

The uproar resulted in appointment of a citizens' committee to study the tax question and to submit recommendations to the mayor and council for the next budget vote.

Three weeks later, the voters were back at the polls, this time granting approval for the planning of a second Mill Ridge school and an addition to the Shelter Rock School. The vote came



News-Times—Thompson

Death's grimace

John Pardue grimaces with pain as he is put in an ambulance in Bridgeport where he was shot while attempting an escape from the federal courthouse. Pardue was being tried for the triple bombing and bank robbery in Danbury on Feb. 13, 1970. He died later in a Missouri hospital.

Bomb saga maintains

By Ken Stack
News-Times staff

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The presence of antiwar priests Philip and Daniel Berrigan, serving sentences at the Federal Correctional Institution for destruction of draft records, also attracted national attention to Danbury. William Kunstler, their attorney, and national politicians arrived on the scene after J. Edgar Hoover, FBI director, charged the two priests with involvement in an alleged kidnap-bombing plot in Washington, D.C.

Various peace groups sponsored intermittent vigils outside the prison to express support for the priests during the year, but most activity, including a hunger strike by sympathetic prisoners at FCI, came after the brothers were denied parole in July.

Major attention was given to a peaceful vigil Oct. 2 held at the city park on Lake Kenosia after a federal judge upheld a ban on use of the prison property.

National prominence of a different kind came to John Toland of Long Ridge Road during the year when it was announced in May that he had been awarded the 1971 Pulitzer Prize for general nonfiction for his book, "The Rising Sun, The Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire."

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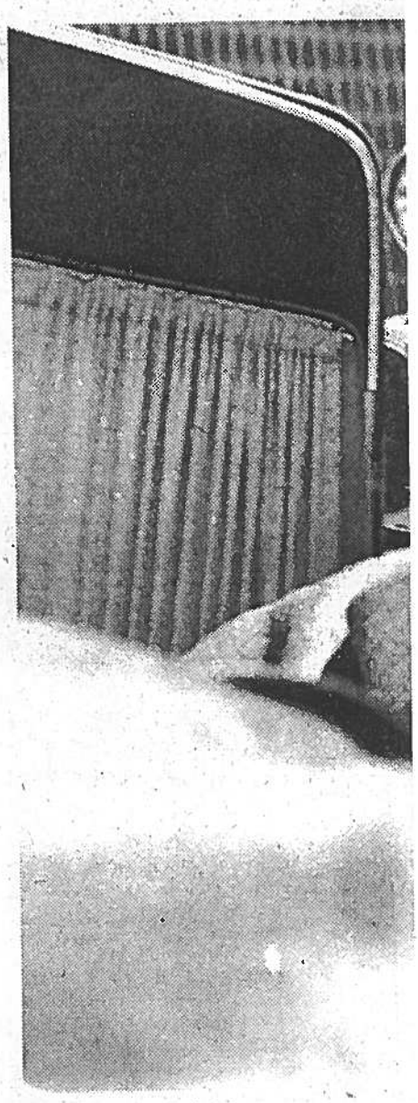
The uproar resulted in appointment of a citizens' committee to study the tax question and to submit recommendations to the mayor and council for the next budget vote.

Three weeks later, the voters were back at the polls, this time granting approval for the planning of a second Mill Ridge school and an addition to the Shelter Rock School. The vote came after most of the beginning of the year was spent unsuccessfully trying to find a suitable site other than the controversial one on Lake Kenosia rejected by the voters. The second Mill Ridge school was proposed as a means to end the impasse.

In the regular city election, Mayor Gino J. Arconti overcame opposition from Republican Martin Rader and independent candidates Mrs. Sarah Rothkopf and the Rev. W.D. Cleveland to win re-election to a third term. Fellow Democrats swept all contested races, also for the third consecutive time.

Involved in the election were threats to go to court over the city's failure to reapportion the seven wards and over irregularities in the voting lists arising from failure to comply with standards established by state statute. While neither case was pushed through prior to the November election, neither is considered a dead issue.

To spray or not to spray became the most controversial question in the growing area of environmental concern as homeowners were faced with a massive infestation of gypsy moths and elm span worms. Concern over possible effects of widespread spraying of pesticides has led to a ban on nonagricultural aerial spraying of broad-spectrum pesticides in the state.



John Pardue grimaces with
bulance in Bridgeport where
ing an escape from the feder

Consumer and environmental advocate Ralph Nader keynoted an environmental conference at Western Connecticut State College to initiate an "aesthetic environment year" program there.

Other signs of concern emerged as a Connecticut Earth Action Group chapter formed in March and began holding monthly recycling drives, and students walked for funds in an April Earth Sunday march. The council approved participation in a Candlewood Lake authority to control the lake provided bordering towns also join.

Probably the major environmental battle was fought over Connecticut Light & Power Co.'s proposal for a power line from New Milford to Norwalk. As citizens opposing the proposal rallied to form the Fairfield Litchfield Environmental Council (FLEC), a three-day hearing was held

Secure housing for Pardue doubted

2-5-72

DANBURY — State and federal officials will meet later this month to talk about the apparent lack of secure mental facilities in this state to house robbery suspect James P. Pardue or other criminals considered potentially dangerous.

The meeting, scheduled for Feb. 28, was called by U.S. District Court Judge Robert C. Zampano, after it was reported there is no secure place to house Pardue.

Pardue, 23, is accused of collaborating with his brother John, to blow up the Danbury police headquarters, explode two other bombs and rob about $26,000 from the Union Savings Bank in February 1970.

Judge Zampano has ruled that Pardue is not mentally competent to stand trial and has ordered authorities to find an institution suitably secure to treat him.

The defendant's lawyer claims Pardue is being held without a trial and without adequate treatment.

Pardue has been held at the Federal Correctional Institution here but an FCI official testified Thursday that its medical facilities are not adequate for a prisoner in his mental condition.

Pardue was transferred to the FCI from the state prison in Somers, Dec. 22. Before the transfer he allegedly fashioned a bar of soap to look like a pistol in an unsuccessful attempt to escape from the state jail in Montville.

Statements introduced Friday before Zampano indicated a federal inspector's study showed a new prisoner area in the Connecticut Valley Hospital in Middletown was among the facilities considered inadequate to hold Pardue.

4-12-73

State transfers Pardue to security mental hospital

MIDDLETOWN — James Pardue, charged with the Feb. 13, 1970, bank robbery and bombings in Danbury, has been transferred to the Connecticut Valley Hospital, a state mental health department security treatment center here.

Pardue, 25, had been held in the state jail in New Haven. He has been declared mentally incompetent to stand trial on federal charges involving the 1970 crimes, by U.S. District Judge Robert C. Zampano. The judge also ordered Pardue be released by the federal officials and transferred to the custody of the state of Connecticut.

Raymond Lopes, deputy state corrections commissioner, said Pardue was examined by a psychiatrist and as a result was transferred to the Middletown hospital.

Pardue, and his brother, John, were charged with bank robbery and illegal use of explosives after the Danbury Police Station, a car and the Union Savings Bank were damaged by bombs set off in connection with the robbery of the bank.

John Pardue was killed in the spring of 1971 during an attempted escape from the Bridgeport federal building where he was on trial on the charges.

On his deathbed John admitted participating in four murders and four bank robberies in Connecticut, New York and Missouri. He admitted he and "the other person" killed his father and grandmother in Missouri when the father objected to using the house as a hideout.

Vol. 93, No. 271 20¢ Daily at Newsstand Danbury, Conn. 06810, Friday, October 1, 1976 Phone 744-5100

Pardue arrested in Colorado

Pardue arrested in Colorado case

Continued from Page 1

When Pardue went into the house, "she bailed out and ran across the street" to some people who were working in their yard. They called police, but Pardue fled, apparently picked up Chatfield and left the city.

Wilson said Pardue and Chatfield met while both were inmates at the federal mental hospital in Springfield, Mo. Both had been committed to the mental hospital after bank robbery charges were lodged against both, Chatfield in California and Pardue in Connecticut.

Pardue was later transferred to a maximum security mental hospital in Connecticut, and Chatfield transferred to San Quentin federal penitentiary in California. Chatfield was released "a few months ago," Wilson said, and apparently joined Pardue in Kansas city.

Pardue wound up in Kansas City after a judge in Union, Mo., freed him after police were unable to produce admissible evidence he killed his father and grandmother in 1969 following a bank robbery and bombing in Union, Mo.

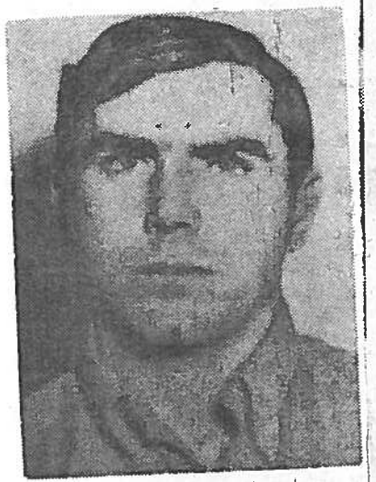
He was found innocent by reason of insanity on the bank robbery and bombing charges, and had pleaded innocent to the murder charges for the same reason before he was released.

He was taken to Missouri from Connecticut after Connecticut Superior Court Judge T. Clark Hull ordered him released from a maximum security mental hospital after psychiatrists said he was no longer insance.

Pardue had been committed to the hospital in 1974 after he was found innocent by reason of insanity of a bombing spree and bank robbery in downtown Danbury in 1970. Pardue and his brother John had been charged with the Feb. 13 bombings of the Danbury police station, the Union Savings Bank and a car parked in the Danbury Mall parking lot.

The bombings, which injured 26 persons, covered the $26,365 armed robbery of the bank. The police station was so heavily damaged it was torn down and replaced. The bank did not sustain structural damage and still stands.

John died in April, 1971, from gunshot wounds suffered in an escape attempt from the federal courthouse in Bridgeport during his trial on the bank robbery and bombing charges. A federal guard shot him twice when he produced a sawed-off shot-gun smuggled into the courthouse by his wife.



James Pardue

John gave a deathbed confession in which he told of his part in the murder of his father and grandmother and two men whom he named as robbers of a bank in Georgetown. He also confessed to four bank robberies in Connecticut, New York and Missouri, implicating "the other person" in all the murders and robberies, according to the FBI.

Charges include kidnap, rape, robbery, unlawful flight

By Bob Chuvala
News-Times staff

James Pardue and another man charged with the abduction and rape of a Kansas City, Mo., woman last August were arrested by FBI agents in Aurora, Colo. on attempted bank robbery charges.

Pardue, 30, and George Chatfield, 44, were held in Denver under $500,000 cash bond each following their arrest Wednesday in connection with the attempted robbery of a Lakewood, Colo., bank on Sept. 7.

Pardue was freed by Connecticut authorities last year after spending several years in mental hospitals on bombing and bank robbery charges in Danbury in 1970.

Donald Sebesta of the FBI office here said charges of unlawful flight to avoid prosecution also were lodged against the pair in connection with the Kansas City incident.

Sebesta said both men were arrested outside their apartment in a middle-class section of the Denver suburb. Pardue was armed with a derringer loaded with hollow-nosed .22 caliber bullets, he said, but neither offered any resistance.

FBI agents discovered four other weapons and evidence in the apartment linking the two men to the attempted bank robbery, Sebesta said.

According to Sebesta, Pardue and Chatfield entered the First Westland National Bank in Lakewood Sept. 7 and identified themselves as agents for the Colorado Department of Revenue. They asked to see the bank president, and once in a conference room, pulled a revolver on the bank official and demanded $285,000 in cash.

At one point the revolver was put back into the briefcase one of the robbers carried, and the president ran from the conference room. As he fled, one of the robbers fired a shot at him, then ran from the bank and commandeered a passing car driven by a woman. They freed the woman a few blocks from the scene, then abandoned the car about one-half mile away.

Sebesta said they linked the two men to the robbery after Chatfield allegedly attempted to obtain a birth certificate from the Cheyenne, Wyo., bureau of vital statistics. The certificate was in the name of a dead child and was an apparent attempt to create a new identity, Sebesta said.

As a result of that investigation, FBI agents put together a complex investigation linking the two to the attempted bank robbery.

Pardue and Chatfield face charges of kidnaping, rape and sodomy in the abduction of a 26-year-old woman Aug. 16. The unidentified woman was held for three days in a coffin-like box in the basement of Pardue's three-story townhouse in Kansas City. She was repeatedly assaulted sexually.

Sgt. Donald Wilson of the Kansas City police department said today the abduction was apparently a trial run of a planned kidnaping for ransom of a prominent Kansas City businessman.

"We don't know whom exactly they planned to kidnap," Wilson said. "We do know they were trying to watch at least two people."

Wilson said the woman escaped after Pardue drove her to his mother and stepfather's home in a nearby community. Pardue "had hypnosis incantations" he read to the woman while she was imprisoned in the box, Wilson said.

Wilson said police theorize he was taking the woman into a rural area to kill her, but stopped by his mother's house to return a saw to his stepfather which he had used to build the box. He left her in the car parked in front of the home after "giving her a key word he had used" in the hypnosis session,

Continued on Page 8

Pardue undergoes more psychological tests

By Ruth Lockwood
News-Times staff

James Pardue, who has never been brought to trial on numerous counts of murder and robbery including the 1970 bombings of a Danbury police station and bank, is undergoing 24-hour-a-day psychological testing in Missouri to determine if he is faking mental illness.

If he is found mentally competent he will stand trial on a variety of new charges, including kidnaping and bank robbery.

Pardue is in a federal prison hospital in Springfield, Mo. A federal judge sent Pardue to the hospital earlier this year after psychiatric exams by a state court-appointed psychiatrist were inconclusive.

Court officials have described Pardue as "extremely intelligent and able to fake his mental illness."

Pardue faces charges in Missouri and Colorado.

He is charged with kidnaping, rape and sodomy in connection with an August 1976 incident in Kansas City, Mo. He and another man, George Chatfield, allegedly kidnaped a 27-year-old woman and held her captive in a coffin-like box for three days.

He will also face charges of kidnaping, conspiracy, felony menacing, violation of the state's violent crime act, second-degree burglary and attempted robbery in connection with a Sept. 7 attempt to rob a bank in Lakewood, Colo.

Pardue was arrested Oct. 1 in Aurora, Colo. in connection with both incidents.

Pardue's attorney in Missouri, Robert G. Duncan, said this morning that the tests should be completed soon and that his client would probably enter an innocent plea to the Missouri charges before being returned to Colorado to face charges there.

Missouri Prosecutor Lee Hull said nothing probably would happen for another three weeks.

Duncan and Hull also said that a possible agreement to have Pardue plead guilty to reduced charges in the abduction and sexual assault of the Kansas City, Mo. woman, did not work out.

The terms were not disclosed.

Pardue, 30, and Chatfield, 44, allegedly abducted the 27-year-old Kansas City woman in August and held her captive in an elaborately constructed wooden box, opening it only to sexually assault her and feed her from a baby bottle.

The assault took place at Pardue's posh three-story townhouse in Kansas City. Kansas City police have said that the abduction was apparently a trial run of a planned kidnaping for ransom of a prominent Kansas City businessman.

The woman escaped after Pardue drove her to his mother and stepfather's home nearby. Police there theorize Pardue was on his way to take the woman to a remote area to kill her, but stopped by his mother's house to return a saw he had used to build the box. He left the car parked in front of the home and when he went inside she bailed out and ran across the street to some people who were working in their yard. They called police, but Pardue fled, apparently picked up Chatfield, and left the state.

The two then allegedly fled to Colorado and on Sept. 7 entered a Lakewood, Colo. bank and identified themselves as Colorado Department of Revenue agents. They asked to see the bank president, and once in a conference room, pulled a revolver on the bank official and demanded $285,000 in cash.

At one point, police said, the revolver was put back into the briefcase one of the thieves carried, and the president ran from the conference room. As he fled, one of the robbers fired a shot at him, then ran from the bank and commandeered a passing car driven by a woman. They freed the woman a few blocks from the scene, then abandoned the car about a half-mile away. They were arrested in Aurora, Colo. a few weeks later.

Just before the attempted bank robbery, Lakewood police said, Pardue and Chatfield allegedly took "expensive camera equipment" from an apartment about six blocks from the bank. They had some of the equipment in their possession when FBI agents arrested the duo for the bank holdup, police said.

Pardue and Chatfield met while both were inmates in the federal mental hospital in Springfield, Mo. Both had been committed to the mental hospital after bank robbery charges were lodged against them, Chatfield in California and Pardue in Connecticut.

Pardue wound up in Kansas City after a judge in Union, Mo. freed him after police were unable to produce

Continued on Page 14

March 23
1977

Pardue undergoes more

Continued from Page 13

admissible evidence he killed his father and grandmother in 1969 following a bank robbery and bombings in Union, Mo.

He was found innocent by reason of insanity on the bank robbery and bombing charges, and had pleaded innocent to the murder charges for the same reason before he was released.

He was taken to Missouri from Connecticut after a Connecticut Superior Court judge ordered him released from a maximum security mental hospital after psychiatrists said he was no longer insane.

Pardue had been committed to the hospital in 1974 after he was found innocent by reason of insanity of a bombing spree and bank robbery in downtown Danbury in February of 1970.

Pardue and his brother, John, bombed the Danbury police station, the Union Savings Bank and a car parked in the Danbury Mall parking lot.

The bombings, which injured 26 persons, covered the $26,365 armed robbery of the bank. The police station was so heavily damaged it was torn down and replaced. The bank remains.

John died in April 1971, from gunshot wounds suffered in an escape attempt from the federal courthouse in Bridgeport during his trial on the bank robbery and bombing charges.

A federal guard, Anthony Dirienzo III, then 19, shot him when he produced a sawed-off shot gun smuggled into the courthouse by his wife.

Pardue was holding the weapon on the guard's father, Anthony Dirienzo Jr., also a guard at the courthouse. The

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The News-T

Vol. 107, No. 41
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Danbury, Conn. 06810, Sunday, February 11, 1990

A blast from the past

Pardue brothers' heist 20 years ago

By Patrick O'Neil
THE NEWS-TIMES

DANBURY — Lt. Leo Gantert was typing the letter "D" on a report in the old police station on the morning of Feb. 13, 1970, when he heard a monstrous explosion. Seconds later he found himself on the floor, looking up through thick dust and smoke at swaying ceiling lights dangling from electrical cords.

"Have you ever been in war?" asked Gantert as he recalled the events of that Friday the 13th across two decades. "That's what it felt like."

The explosion, caused by a bomb hidden in a lobby ashtray, sent Gantert's typewriter flying into his face. He was bleeding profusely as he stumbled through the smoke and dust trying to get to the other officer who had been working the front desk that morning. Suddenly, he plunged through a hole in the floor into the basement. "I remember the air was cooler down there," said Gantert, now 68 and the deputy chief of the department.

Gantert had no way of knowing then that two minutes after the explosion that rocked the police station, two robbers had dashed into the Union Savings Bank down the street and ordered everyone to the floor. About three minutes later, as they escaped with $26,385 in cash, the robbers threw a bomb into the bank. The explosion blew out windows and sent debris flying throughout the sturdy old brick structure.

People who happened to be outside the station and the bank watched in disbelief. Later, some said they thought terrorists were at work, others immediately suspected anti-war extremists. One woman gazed at the sky, fearing another bomb from above.

A crew from the telephone company working directly outside the police station raced into the chaos and began the emergency evacuation of the building.

Nineteen minutes after the first explosion at 10:41 a.m., another bomb exploded in a car the parking lot of the old Danbury Mall on northern Main Street. The explosion sent the hood flying 75 feet up in the air. It landed 50 feet away on the mall roof, where it was found days later.

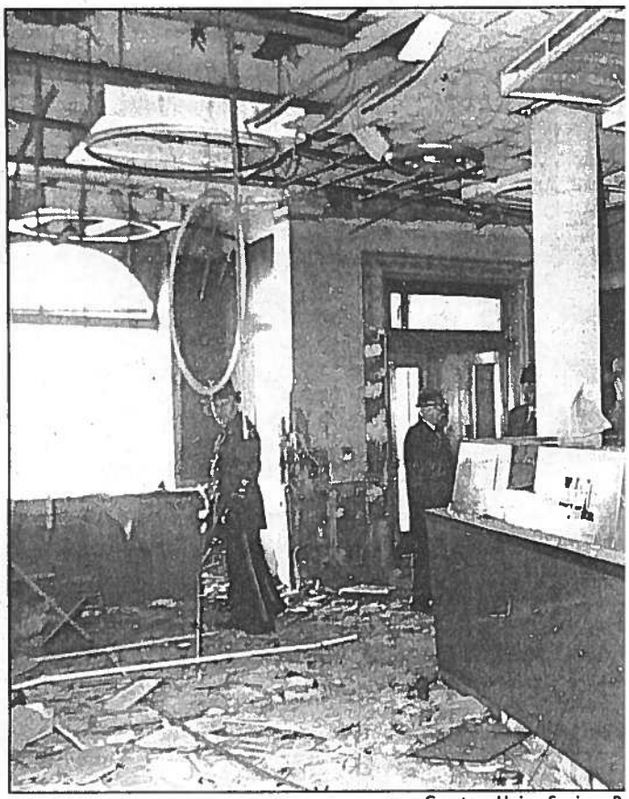
Danbury was without police protection. All communications — phones, radio — in the department ceased. Waterlines snapped, air raid sirens wailed and the scene along Main Street turned to chaos. But by nightfall, the department was

See BLAST, Page A-8

News-Times file ph

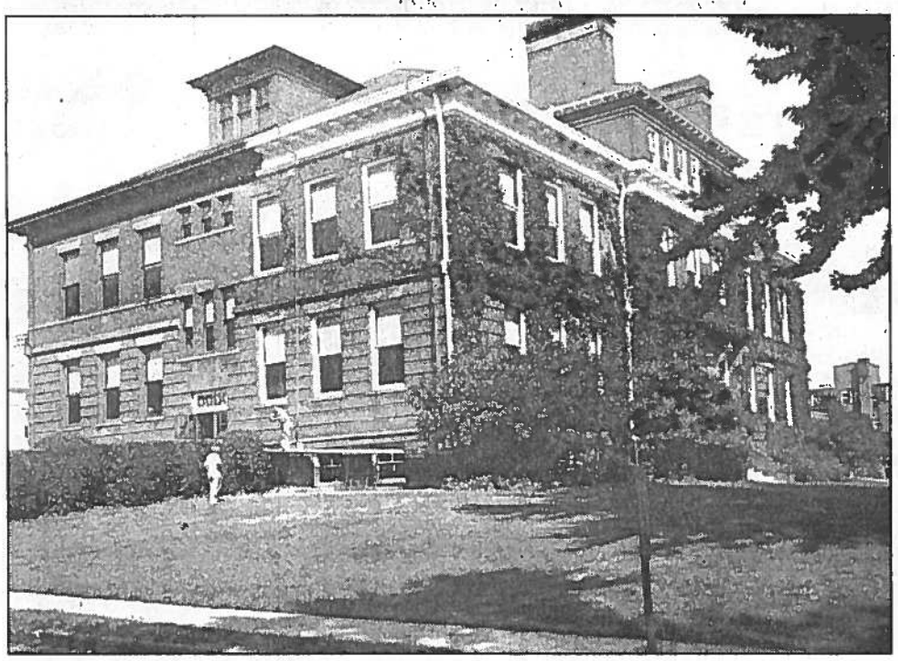
Above: James Pardue, left, and his brother, John, center, on their way to their federal arraignment March 30, 1970. The two had bombed the Danbury Police Station and Union Savings Bank Feb. 13, 1970. At far right is Anthony Dirienzo Jr., then deputy chief U.S. Marshal.

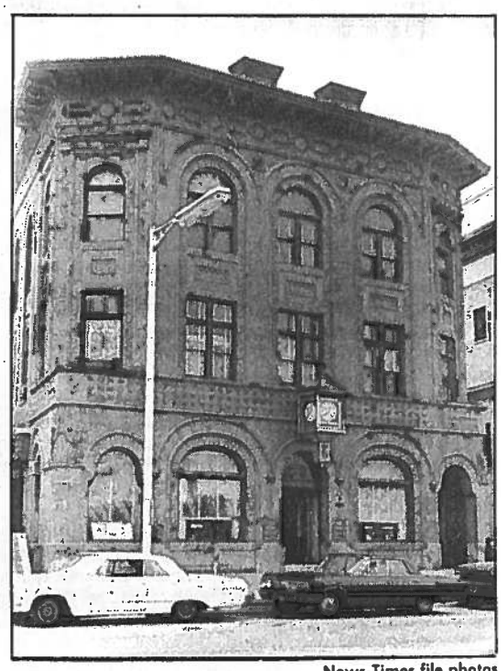
Right: The interior of Union Savings Bank after the bombing.



Courtesy Union Savings B

THE NEWS-TIMES, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1990





News-Times file photos

The bombing destroyed the interior of the Danbury Police Station, left, which was later torn down and replaced by the current building. The stately brick building had begun life as the Main Street School. The Union Savings Bank, above right in a 1967 photo, was relieved of $26,385, but was not seriously damaged by the bombing.

Courtesy Mr. and Mrs. David Demillo of Danbury

Eight Southern New England Telephone Co. workers received certificates of commendation for heroism for their help in the emergency evacuation of the police department and for the speedy restoration of service.

trial today, my son just shot John Pardue."

Zampano then declared a mistrial.

Three weeks after he was shot, John sent for Stalnaker. "I've got a million-dollar story," he told the agent from his hospital bed. An emergency tracheotomy made it almost impossible for John to speak, but through pantomime and written notes, he described for the FBI agent the murders of three men, five bank robberies, including the one near Union, the Danbury bombing and the murders of his father and grandmother in Missouri.

The brothers had killed them, John confessed, because they feared they would talk to the FBI about their bank robberies.

They had also killed a man who refused to surrender his car following a Georgetown bank robbery in 1969, John confessed.

A fifth bank robbery just over the Connecticut line in Vista, N.Y., in 1968, had also been a Pardue job, John said. In that one, the Pardues had locked New York state trooper William Hilliard in the trunk of his cruiser and used the car as a getaway vehicle.

John further informed Stalnaker that two bullet-riddled and burned bodies that had been found in Kent, Conn., in April 1969, were those of the brothers' accomplices in the Vista robbery.

John, who died shortly after his confession, never implicated his brother, however. In describing his crime spree to Stalnaker, he had described only "another man."

James Pardue was released from Whiting Forensic in 1975 when Judge T. Clark Hull of Danbury, now a state Supreme Court justice, found him to be sane. He was immediately arrested by Missouri authorities for the murders of his father and grandmother.

In June 1976 he was released because none of the evidence against him was admissable. He has never been proscecuted for the Danbury crime.

That was not to be the last heard from James Pardue. Two months later, federal authorities sounded a five-state alert for his arrest in connection with the kidnapping, rape and sodomy of a 27-year-old Kansas City woman.

Pardue and another man, police said, had abducted the woman, kept her locked in a coffin-like box for three days, sexually assaulting her time and time again.

Pardue's lawyer, Robert G. Duncan, said at the time his client was interested in sensory deprivation and was experimenting with the concept. The woman, he said, had been a willing participant.

James was convicted only of unlawful restraint in the case, for which he received 10 years. He also was sentenced in 1977 to 25 years in prison for his part in a botched bank robbery in Colorado.

He is expected to walk out of federal prison in Texarcana, Texas, on March 19, 1991, exactly one month shy of his 44th birthday, a free man. Among the interests he has cultivated while in prison, he said in a 1981 interview, is in the making of atomic bombs.

"I don't think these people showed much regard for human life," said former Colorado federal prosecutor Rod Snow, who sent James Pardue to prison in 1977.

Duncan, the Missouri lawyer who represented Pardue in the Colorado caper and the kidnapping, rape and sodomy trial, said he often thinks of James.

"I'm reminded of him daily. He painted a portrait of me from memory while in prison and it is an extremely good likeness. It hangs in my office," Duncan said.

When told his former client would be out of prison in a year, Duncan said, "I'd give anything for James to stop by and see me on his way to somewhere else. I don't think I'd like him in town, though."

Duncan said that when Pardue returns to society, "The world will be a much more interesting place."

Asked whether he thought James Pardue is a dangerous man, Duncan replied, "Oh God yes, oh lord yes."

2/12/95

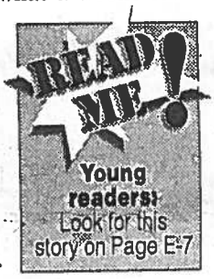
Explosive pair gave city a scare

Pardue brothers stormed Danbury 25 years ago

By John Pirro
THE NEWS-TIMES

DANBURY — On a frigid February morning 25 years ago, Catherine Trocola was catching up on some filing in the records room of the old police station when 18 sticks of dynamite blew the place apart.

"I had the feeling of something hot and cold surging up my body. I thought, 'My God, I'm having a stroke. This is what a stroke feels like,' " she said.



Lt. Leo Gantert, blinded by blood and dust, found himself in the eerily silent basement after falling through the floor of what had been the stationhouse lobby.

"I couldn't hear a thing, upstairs or downstairs. It was like a tomb," said Gantert, now deputy police chief.

Within the span of 20 minutes, bombs went off at the police station, a bank and a shopping plaza parking lot, all on Main Street. Under the cover of smoke, noise and confusion, two men robbed the Union Savings Bank and vanished with more than $26,000.

A day later, on shore leave on the French Riviera, Navy Machinist 2nd Class Joseph Fecarotta was telling his shipmates "what a nice, quiet town I came from," when a newspaper headline caught his eye.

Fecarotta couldn't read French. But he recognized "Danbury" in the screaming bold type, and from the pictures of devastation that accompanied the article, he knew something major had happened.

Well before Fecarotta located an English-language newspaper, the events of Friday, Feb. 13, 1970, had already been chiseled indelibly into local history — and the memories of a generation of city residents.

> "It was like when Kennedy was killed. It was one of those days you remember exactly where you were and what you were doing when you heard about it."
>
> **Police Lt. Kevin Barry**
> **Speaking of the bombing of Danbury, Feb. 13, 1970**

"It was like when Kennedy was killed. It was one of those days you remember exactly where you were and what you were doing when you heard about it," police Lt. Kevin Barry said.

■

Police had barely begun to set up emergency headquarters at the War Memorial in Rogers Park when federal agents, state police and the national media descended on the city. With anti-Vietnam War activism and radical fervor simmering nationwide, initial speculation was the bombs had been planted by some underground group.

"Washington thought it was the work of terrorists, so they put a lot of emphasis on it right away," said FBI agent Thurl Stalnaker, who led the intensive, multi-agency investigation. "We had as many as 40 to 50 agents on the case."

Working around the clock, investigators took just over three weeks to crack the case and arrest 27-year-old John Pardue of Danbury and his 23-year-old brother, James, who lived in Maryland. But it was more than a year — after John Pardue's

▷ Please see **EXPLOSIVE**, Page A-8

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Blast

Continued from Page A-1

operating again out of the War Memorial.

Although it quickly became clear that the bombings were designed to divert the police during the robbery of the bank, no one knew at the time that the devastation that rocked the downtown was only part of a nationwide crime spree embarked upon by two brothers, John Russell Pardue and James Peter Pardue.

The investigation began even before the Pardues left the city. A bank employee had been able to call state police about the robbery and describe two men who had fled the scene in a car. Furthermore, a bank employee had handed the brothers a packet of marked bills or "bait money" — a routine procedure — along with the other cash.

As emergency personnel attended to the two dozen injured — amazingly, no one was killed — 50 FBI agents along with a similar number of state police descended on Danbury to assist the locals.

Like many others connected with the incident, Thurl Stalnaker, 71, never forgot it. An FBI agent, he is largely credited with cracking the Pardue case.

"It had such far-reaching implications, it truly was a nationwide effort. I remember it so vividly because it was the most important case that I've ever been involved in. It was the most sensational case that I know about the FBI being involved in. There were others that were more famous, but from a pure criminal aspect, this was *THE* case," Stalnaker recalled.

On the morning of the bombing, Stalnaker was parked in a New Haven lot talking with a source when he heard over the police radio that Danbury's police station had been bombed. Then and there he gave up his plans to be home early that day for his son's 10th birthday.

Charles Weeks, head of the New Haven FBI bureau, was soon on the telephone with Stalnaker. "Washington's already been in touch," Weeks told Stalnaker, a specialist in bank robberies and a veteran agent. "This case has got to be solved."

As Stalnaker drove toward Danbury, he searched his memory for a similar crime, a link that might produce a suspect. Nothing clicked, but a thought did occur.

"I did come up with a recollection of a bombing of a sheriff's office out west somewhere. I associated it somehow with St. Louis," he said. "It was a shot in the dark."

The bombing and accompanying bank robbery in Missouri the previous year, did, as it turned out, did have a connection to Danbury. Stalnaker called his FBI counterpart in Missouri, who at first came up empty-handed. Later he called back to say there was a detail that might be important.

When police had canvassed an area near Union, Mo., in late 1969, where the bombing/robbery had taken place that year, a local sheriff had accompanied federal agents on a whim because he had to serve a divorce summons to a man who lived in the vicinity. The man's estranged wife, the Missouri agent recalled, had lived in Connecticut.

When the sheriff and the federal agents arrived at the Missouri home to serve the summons, however, it was empty. Both the man upon whom it was to be served, John Pardue Sr., 58, and his mother, Daisy Link Pardue, 79, — had left, it seemed, in a hurry. Food sat on the table uneaten, the wiring of a toaster that had been left on had burned out.

Eleven days after the Danbury bombing, newspaper accounts identified Pardue's sons, John and James, as suspects. Brenda Pardue, the ex-wife of the younger John Pardue, was living in Norwalk at the time and learned of the disappearance of her ex-father-in-law and the elderly woman from these accounts.

Concerned, she approached Stalnaker and offered information, including the fact that her ex-husband had been living near Union, owned a Thompson submachine gun and a silencer, had been in the service and had access to explosives.

Three weeks after the bombings, on March 7, 1970, John Pardue, 27, was arrested by federal authorities in Danbury as he left his rented house at 13 Crane St. Inside the house, where he had lived for the past 14 months, was more than $7,000 was stuffed into children's diapers. "We hit the jackpot when we arrested John because we found the bait money," Stalnaker said.

James, 23, was arrested several days later in Maryland and both were held in Bridgeport jail awaiting the trial. James was ruled insane in July and sent to Whiting Forensic Hospital in Middletown.

At the time, people marveled at the clean-cut suspects, who looked more like college students than the vicious thugs of wanted poster stereotypes. Those who knew the Pardue brothers described them as bright and charming. John exuded power over the women in his life, especially his second wife, Nancy.

Whether James was truly insane or simply adept at conning psychiatrists is a matter of debate. Most do agree, though, he suffered from severe psychological problems.

John's trial began on St. Patrick's Day 1971 in Bridgeport. Three weeks into testimony, John Pardue hatched a plan with Nancy's aid. The woman smuggled a 22-inch sawed-off .308 rifle into his cell before court started on the morning of April 7.

"It was the one and only unsupervised visit she had with him," said Anthony Dirienzo Jr., who was chief deputy U.S. marshal at the time. Dirienzo now lives in Ansonia and is captain of the New Haven County Sheriff's Department.

Among those with Dirienzo that morning was his 19-year-old son Anthony III, a part-time guard. As the elder Dirienzo opened Pardue's cell to take him to court, the prisoner spun around and pointed the weapon at him. "It was 3 feet away from my belly," the elder Dirienzo recalled. The next thing the sheriff heard was five explosions. His son had hit Pardue with three shots.

"Get these damn ghouls away from me," Pardue told Dirienzo as he lay on the cell floor bleeding from the wounds that would eventually prove fatal.

Dirienzo went to trial Judge Robert Zampano and told him, "Judge, we won't be able to continue with the

Explosive day

Continued from Page A-1

deathbed confession — before the public knew the full extent of the brothers' spectacular and violent crime spree.

"It had more drama than any case I ever worked on. It got a lot of attention at the time, but I never thought it got quite the attention it deserved," said Stalnaker, who lives in North Haven. He retired from the bureau in 1977.

In an era when far more ordinary crime stories have been transformed into made-for-TV movies, it puzzles many who lived through the Pardue case that it hasn't earned even that level of notoriety.

After five bank jobs, five murders and a courthouse shootout that ended his trial and, ultimately, his life, such lack of notice would have been a bitter disappointment to John Pardue.

"He thought this was bigger than Jesse James. He thought he had a crime story that would make criminal history," Stalnaker said. When the FBI agent arrived to interview Pardue as he lay dying in Bridgeport Hospital, the first thing Pardue said was, "I have got a story that's bigger than you can believe."

Stalnaker believed it. He'd already tentatively connected the brothers to hold-ups in three states dating back to 1968, the slaying of a 19-year-old Bridgeport man, the murders of two accomplices and the disappearances of the Pardues' father and grandmother.

■

Sons of a Shell Oil Co. engineer and a bank secretary, John and James Pardue were the products of an affluent background seemingly far removed from the life of crime they embraced. The family came from Missouri, and later moved to the Westport area, where the parents subsequently divorced.

Both brothers were ex-servicemen who knew how to handle explosives. James was described as sensitive and artistic. He lived with his wife and two children in Maryland.

John was the leader. His striking good looks and a glib manner usually enabled him to get his way, especially with women.

"He was a sociopath," Stalnaker said. "John was one of those people who didn't want to wait for anything. What John wanted was what John wanted, and he didn't really care about anyone else. The only thing I ever saw him show real concern for was his attack dog. He was more concerned about that dog

sheriff's office.

The agent in charge said the investigation was at a dead end. Then he mentioned one strange thing that happened after the robbery.

Even though police quickly threw up roadblocks, the getaway car never passed through. The next day, investigators began a canvass of all the homes in the rural area.

The local sheriff accompanied the agents because he had to serve legal papers on a man who lived in the search zone. The man's wife, who lived in Connecticut, was in the process of divorcing him. When authorities reached the farm where the man and his mother lived, evidence, including a half-eaten meal, indicated the occupants had left hastily. The man's car and trailer were missing. His name was John Pardue Sr.

"It meant nothing at the time, and he didn't match the description of either of the robbers. But we never let go of that lead," Stalnaker said.

The name Pardue popped up again a few days later. State and local police went door-to-door along the bombers' suspected getaway route. A Danbury resident named Vinnie Brebenna told them about his strange neighbor.

The neighbor, who lived at 13 Crane St., had "two police dogs who were trained to kill" and lots of guns. Even though he had no apparent source of income, he owned several cars and paid a hefty rent. The previous July 4th, the man had set off homemade fireworks. His name was John Pardue Jr.

Then investigators got a major break. Sheriff William Miller of Franklin County, Mo., whose sta-

Union Savings Bank

The lobby of the Union Savings Bank, 226 Main St., Danbury, as it looked after the Pardue brothers robbed and bombed it on Feb. 13, 1970. They had bombed the Danbury police station minutes before, wiping out the alarm system tied to banks and other businesses.

John Pardue
The mastermind, 1970

zo's belly.

Without hesitating, the son fired five times. Three shots hit Pardue.

Pardue hovered between life and death for weeks. Over the objections of his attorneys, he sent for Stalnaker.

"He'd called me two or three times, trying to con me a little bit. But it was clear he wanted the story told. He wanted me to find someone to write it, because he wanted to leave something for his son," Stalnaker said.

Pardue confirmed everything Stalnaker suspected. He also clearly implicated his younger brother.

"It was very hard for him to do, but he said, 'James has to look out for himself,' " the agent said.

John Pardue admitted shooting Artman when he refused to surrender his car. He said Beck and Void

p. 2/3

[illegible] by."

Testimony at his federal trial in 1971 indicated that John Pardue planted the bomb in an ash can outside the front desk of the Danbury police station on Feb. 13, 1970, sometime after 10:20 a.m. It went off just before 10:40, crippling the alarm system tied into local banks and other businesses.

When two armed men burst into the Union Savings Bank at 226 Main St. two minutes later and ordered everyone to the floor, a bank official tried to call the police, but there was no response.

As the robbers left with $26,000 in cash and nearly $40,000 in travelers' checks, they exploded another bomb in the bank lobby.

The robbers fled in a white Chrysler station wagon, abandoning it in the parking lot of the old Danbury Mall on Main Street. At 11 a.m., a third blast reduced the getaway car to bits of smoking metal, after the robbers took off in another vehicle.

Almost miraculously, no one died as a result of the three explosions. More than two dozen people were injured, though, including Gantert and Trocola.

"It was the building that saved us," said then-Sgt. Nelson Macedo, now the police chief. "The walls were very thick, and it had huge windows that allowed the force of the blast to escape."

But the station, housed in a former school, was so badly damaged it had to be razed. The bank reopened after a few days.

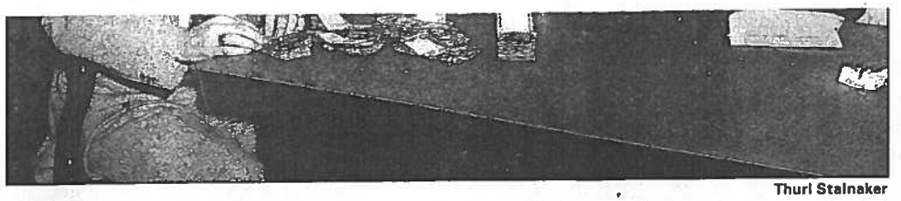
■

Although the bank job had been meticulously planned, an investigator's hunch, an angry ex-wife and dogged laboratory work combined with a bit of luck to trip up the Pardues.

Stalnaker, then the bank robbery coordinator for the FBI in Connecticut, was assigned to the case. On the drive to Danbury from the bureau's New Haven office, a thought flashed in his mind.

"I remembered reading about a bank robbery near St. Louis a few months earlier. The sheriff's department had been bombed. There were just enough similarities to make me wonder if there was a connection," he said.

His first call after assessing the situation in Danbury was to the FBI office in Missouri. His hunch was correct. On Nov. 13, 1969, he was told, two men had held up the United Bank in Union, Mo., and escaped with $18,000. Just before the robbery, a bomb had exploded at the



Thurl Stalnaker

FBI Agent Thurl Stalnaker, standing, supervises the audit of the money recovered at the time of John Pardue's arrest in Danbury March 7, 1970.

tion had been blown up, held a press conference. He related Stalnaker's hunch that the Union, Mo., and Danbury bank heists were connected. He also mentioned that John Pardue Sr., 58, and his mother, Daisy Link Pardue, 79, had been missing since the Missouri robbery.

Because the Danbury bombings were front-page news across the country, the story was picked up by the wire services and reprinted in Connecticut newspapers.

The next day, Stalnaker got a call from Brenda Pardue of Norwalk, John's first wife. Brenda Pardue had seen the story. She had been looking for her ex-husband for nearly a year, ever since he abandoned her on a trip to Ireland and absconded with their infant son.

Brenda Pardue wanted to find her baby, which she eventually did. But she also expressed concern for the safety of her ex-husband's father and grandmother. John Pardue, she said, had access to explosives and owned a submachine gun. And his younger brother matched the description of one of the holdup men in both robberies.

■

The next advance in the investigation came in the laboratory. One of the few parts of the getaway car to survive the blast was the front bumper.

On it were the remnants of a sticker that proved to be a parking permit from the University of Maryland.

Using the sticker, investigators traced the car through three owners to a College Park, Md. man, who had sold it a few weeks before the bombing to a party he claimed not to recall.

The investigators' luck held. A neighborhood busybody had been looking out her window the morning the car changed hands. She identified the buyer as James Pardue.

Investigators now had enough information for arrest warrants.

On March 7, police apprehended John Pardue as he left his Crane Street house. His wallet contained

The News-Times/Bob East III

Tomorrow is the 25th anniversary of the day the Pardues' bomb propelled Deputy Police Chief Leo Gantert — then Lt. Gantert — from the police station's first floor to its basement.

bills with serial numbers that linked them to the Union Savings Bank.

Several hours later, James Pardue was picked up at his home in Lusby, Md.

The Danbury case was solved, but the strange and bloody tale of the Pardue brothers had barely started to unfold.

■

Stalnaker was struck by the similarities between the Danbury and Union, Mo., holdups and and a string of other unsolved robberies.

There were certain phrases the robbers had used. One was, "Where's the cash reserve?" a term indicating the bandits had some familiarity with banking practices. The Pardues' mother had worked in a bank for years.

The first similar-sounding holdup occurred had on Aug. 17, 1968, in Vista, N.Y. A state trooper had been jumped by three men and forced into the trunk of his cruiser. They drove it to the Northern Westchester National Bank and held it up. As they fled with $22,000, the robbers set off a smoke bomb.

The robbers abandoned the cruiser in an unfinished, out-of-the-way subdivision. The trooper eventually escaped. Much later, investigators learned that James Pardue had done work in the subdivision.

Two months later, on Oct. 22, two black men held up a branch of the Fairfield County Trust Co. in Georgetown. They escaped with nearly $40,000.

The getaway car was found a few hours later on a remote stretch of road in Redding. In the trunk was 19-year-old William Artman of Bridgeport, a bullet in his head. Under his crumpled body were cigars that said, "It's a girl." Artman's wife had just given birth to a baby.

Although the gunmen were black, Stalnaker suspected the Pardues were involved after learning that John Pardue had rented a cottage about a mile from where the getaway car and the body were found.

In May 1969, two gunmen matching the Pardues' description, had

James Pardue
The accomplice, 1970

relieved a bank in Pacific, Mo., of $82,000. A month earlier, hikers had discovered the bodies of two black men along the Housatonic River in Kent, Conn. They had been bound and shot.

The identities of the bodies weren't known until 1971. They were James Richard Beck, 25, an Army deserter, and Richard Void, 27.

Stalnaker believed that the Pardues were responsible for all the crimes, as well as the still unsolved disappearances of their father and grandmother.

But he was unable to question them. James had been declared insane, and was confined to a state mental hospital in Middletown. John was awaiting trial in Bridgeport for the Union Savings Bank holdup and the police station bombing.

■

John hadn't been a model prisoner. At least three times, he attempted escapes. Once, his second wife, Nancy, tried to smuggle a gun to him. On two other occasions, he tried to bribe guards.

On April 8, 1971, three weeks into his trial in Bridgeport federal court, he made his final effort.

Nancy secreted a sawed-off rifle under her clothing and paid what marshals said was her "customary morning visit" to the lockup. By chance, the only matron was out sick. Nancy Pardue wasn't searched.

After she left, Deputy Marshal Anthony Dirienzo Jr. and his 19-year-old son, Anthony III, a part-time guard, went into the lockup to get the prisoner. He spun around and pointed the gun at the elder Dirien-

were killed in a dispute over the division of the money after the Georgetown robbery.

Pardue also solved the mystery of the disappearance of his father and grandmother. John Pardue Sr. had become suspicious about his sons' apparent affluence. He accused them of robbing banks, and threatened to go to the FBI.

"The primary purpose of the trip to Missouri in November was to shoot the old man. The bank robbery was just something they did while they were there. As far as the grandmother was concerned, once they'd riddled the father with bullets, the way John put it, 'She had to go, too,' " Stalnaker said.

The brothers loaded the bodies into a trailer, and towed it to a piece of property James owned in Maryland. Using a backhoe, they had buried the trailer and built a shed over it.

John Pardue died a short time after giving the confession and is buried in Norwalk.

■

James Pardue never served a day in prison for any of the crimes he and his brother committed. Found competent to stand trial in 1974, he was acquitted by reason of insanity.

In late 1975, James was declared sane and turned over to Missouri authorities, who wanted him for the murder of his father and grandmother. But the only witness against him was dead. He was released and headed west.

In 1976, James and another man abducted a woman in Kansas City and locked her in a coffin, holding her prisoner and raping her repeatedly until she escaped three days later. They then traveled to Colorado, where they botched a bank robbery and were captured.

Interviewed behind bars in 1986, James disavowed involvement in most of the crimes he committed with his brother.

He did, however, accept a small measure of blame for the Danbury bombings.

"John planned the whole thing. I just went with him because he was so insistent that I help," he said. "The size and the number of the explosions was as much a shock to me as anyone there."

Released from a federal prison in Texas in March 1991, James lived quietly in Stanberry, Mo., for a short time until he was picked up for illegally possessing a weapon.

Facing the likelihood of another 15 years behind bars for the parole violation, he hanged himself in a Kansas City jail cell that June.

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