

Suspect Boasted Of Bomb Making Unmoved By Carnage

By Corky Siemaszko | New York Daily News | April 25, 1995

Bomber suspect Timothy McVeigh boasted in jail after his arrest "that he can make any type of bomb, all types of bombs," a law enforcement source told the Daily News yesterday. McVeigh showed no emotion when shown pictures of the carnage and dead children at the wrecked Oklahoma City federal building and remained silent about his alleged role in the explosion, according to ABC News. Investigators continued to insist that McVeigh didn't have the brains to build the 4,000-pound bomb or mastermind the deadly blast. And even as McVeigh's Army buddy Terry Nichols was being held by federal authorities as a material witness in the bombings, CBS News reported early this morning that agents had found at Nichols' home blue plastic barrels of a type believed to have been used in making the bomb. Blue plastic fragments, authorities said, have been found embedded in some of the blast victims. McVeigh and Nichols enlisted in the U.S. Army on the same day, May 24, 1988, and did their basic training at Fort Benning, Ga., an Army spokesman said. Nichols asked for an early hardship discharge and left active duty May 15, 1989. McVeigh, however, stayed on and fought in Operation Desert Storm, earning a Bronze Star and combat infantryman's service badge. He was discharged from Fort Riley, Kan., as a sergeant Dec. 31, 1991. McVeigh apparently stayed in the Fort Riley area and was a regular at a bar called The Rock House in nearby Ogden, said manager Geri Schwenk. "After he had a few beers, he got mouthy, rebellious," Schwenk said. "He just kind of seemed like he was mad at everybody, spouting off.

McVeigh also stayed in touch with Nichols. When Nichols worked on a Kansas ranch from March to September last year, McVeigh visited him and later helped him move to Arizona. McVeigh already was living there, in Mohave County an area filled with anti-government, anti-tax groups. It was there that the feds short-circuited a plot hatched by a one-arm white supremacist named Jack Oliphant in 1987 to rob an armored car for money to build a survival camp on his ranch. McVeigh's former neighbors in a trailer park on Route 66 in Kingman, Ariz., said they suspect the accused bomber of setting off an explosion in a nearby field in October. "The sheriffs could never make the case or find out who was involved," said Mohave County Attorney Bill Ekstrom. "It could have been a trial run.

McVeigh, who was arrested less than two hours after the Oklahoma blast and taken into federal custody Friday, goes before a judge tomorrow. But he'll need new lawyers. Yesterday, McVeigh's court-appointed attorneys asked to be removed from the case citing the "terror and carnage" they witnessed and fears for their families' safety. And in what could be their last act on McVeigh's behalf, lawyers Susan Otto and John Coyle filed a motion asking that the case be moved to Denver. Both Otto, a federal public defender, and Coyle, a prominent local attorney, work within blocks of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, the target of the blast that killed at least 80. Flanked by two bodyguards, Coyle said he had

received threats but would not elaborate. He said he and Otto would stay on the case until new lawyers are found. Also last night, police in Valdosta, Ga., questioned Scott Sweely, 32, of Dale City, Okla., in connection with the bombing and let him go after learning that he'd been in the Air Force until Saturday, according to a report. Sweely appeared to match the description of the "John Doe No. 2" wanted in the bombing and was driving a car with Oklahoma license plates, but he apparently did not have the telltale tattoo of a snake on one of his upper arms, sources said. Officials also confirmed published reports yesterday that police found correspondence in McVeigh's car that vowed retribution against government agencies for the 1993 raid on the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Tex. Also, investigators were planning to question a man who called an Oklahoma City newspaper before the bombing and said "something big, something bad" was going to happen in Oklahoma City.