

Fugitive gunmen may have ties to white supremacists

By Jim Woods
Dispatch Staff Reporter

WILMINGTON, Ohio — Two men sought in connection with two gunbattles Saturday involving Wilmington area law enforcement officers may have ties to white supremacists, a law enforcement source said yesterday.

The shootings began about 1:30 p.m. Saturday after a State Highway Patrol trooper stopped a Chevrolet Suburban with Washington state license plates on state Rt. 73 for a registration violation, a patrol release said.

The driver resisted a search by the trooper and ran back to the vehicle.

A passenger in the Suburban then fired several rounds at a Clinton County deputy sheriff backing up the trooper.

The deputy and trooper, who were not hit, returned fire. The two men in the Suburban drove away.

A short time later, a Wilmington police officer saw the Chevy Suburban in a parking lot on Wilmington's west side. When the police officer pulled in the lot, the driver shot at him. Frank Marsden, 56, of Wilmington, driving past the parking lot, was shot in the left shoulder.

He was treated and released.

The driver, a white male with a goatee, and the passenger were last seen running in the area of Nelson Avenue and U.S. Rt. 22.

The names of the two assailants could be released today, the patrol said. A videotape camera in the pa-

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trol cruiser photographed the pair.

A law enforcement source said the Chevy Suburban was registered to a known white supremacist, though the vehicle may have been recently sold to another party.

Pope County, Ark., Sheriff Jay Winters said his department became interested in the Wilmington case upon learning that an AR-15 rifle was found in the vehicle.

Winters said he wants to determine if the weapon, a semiautomatic military-style rifle, could have been stolen from slain gun dealer William Mueller.

The decomposed bodies of Mueller, 52, his wife Nancy, 28, and her daughter, Sarah Elizabeth Powell, 8, were found June 28 in the Illinois Bayou near Russellville, Ark.

Mueller was a gun dealer known to have anti-federal government sympathies, Winters said.

On Dec. 10, South Dakota state police arrested Sean Michael Haines, 19, of Spokane, Wash., on two charges of grand theft for possessing two guns, one of them another rifle Mueller had reported stolen.

Haines was released from the Minnehaha County jail in Sioux

Falls, S.D., after he posted \$50,000 bond.

Winters said the Pope County Sheriff's Department was still checking Haines' story about how he obtained the rifle.

Winters said that Haines claimed he got the weapon from another source.

A law enforcement source said that Haines is a member of the Aryan Nations white supremacist group.

The source said Haines probably knows the two suspected assailants in Ohio but probably was not with them.

Mark Reedstrom, the former assistant Minnehaha County district attorney, said that he argued for a high bond in the case because Haines was an admitted white supremacist from out of state.

Meanwhile, Greene County Sheriff Jerry Erwin said his department has not developed any links between the Wilmington case and that of a deputy being shot at in Greene County at 2 a.m.

An unarmed female deputy was checking outside the Greene County jail building in Xenia when she was confronted by a man with a shotgun. Xenia is 18 miles from Wilmington.

The man said, "You're dead," and fired a deer slug from about 8 feet away, Erwin said. That shot and a second one missed, and the man ran.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.