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## Ex-Eagle Scout sentenced in hate-group bank heists

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Michael William Brescia, once an aspiring soldier in the racist Aryan Republican Army who boasted that he was ready to "shoot it out" with the FBI, was sentenced yesterday to 57 months in prison for his role in a bank robbery committed to finance hate-group activities.

"I apologize for everything I've done and those I victimized as a result of all this foolishness," Brescia told U.S. District Judge Ronald L. Buckwalter.

Buckwalter said he was puzzled about how Brescia, 25, of Andorra, a former Eagle Scout and son of a city fire battalion chief, came to join an armed racist group that the FBI says committed 22 bank robberies in the Midwest from 1992 to 1995 in which more than \$250,000 was stolen. The

money was used to help finance white Christian hate groups intent on overthrowing the government.

Brescia yesterday never specifically recanted his belief in white Christian supremacy, although four witnesses called by defense lawyer Michael J. McGovern said they never knew Brescia to make racist comments or have problems dealing with racial or ethnic minorities.

After the sentencing, Brescia's parents, William and Kathy Brescia, left the courtroom with supporters and declined to comment. Also refusing to comment was Michael Brescia's wife, Esther, whom he met in the early 1990s when he lived in Elohim City, Oklahoma.

Later yesterday, Buckwalter sentenced one of Brescia's four co-defendants, a sometime skinhead musi-

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### SENTENCING from B1

cian Scott Stedeford, to a mandatory 20-year no-parole prison sentence for his participation with Brescia in an Aug. 20, 1995, armed bank robbery in Madison, Wis. Stedeford is serving a a nine-year federal prison term for his conviction in an Aryan Republican Army bank robbery in Iowa.

Stedeford, 30, of Ardmore, and Brescia were indicted by a federal grand jury in January 1997 with Mark William Thomas, 47, a Berks County truck driver who has led white supremacist groups in Pennsylvania for nearly 30 years.

Like Brescia, Thomas and the other two defendants — Peter Kevin Langan, 39, of Columbus, Ohio, and Kevin William McCarthy, 20, of Bustleton — have pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit bank robbery.

Buckwalter will sentence McCarthy on Wednesday and Thomas on Thursday. Federal prosecutors dropped their charges against Langan after he was sentenced to a no-parole 55-year prison term in federal court in Ohio for his bank-robbery conviction there.