

White-supremacist gun probe widens

■ The sentencing of a Berks County man isn't the end of the trail for investigators tracking the moves of the Aryan Republican Army.

From our news services

SPOKANE, Wash. - A white-supremacist gang convicted in a string of bank robberies in the Midwest obtained weapons from a Washington state man convicted in an Ohio shootout and his father, federal authorities say.

Guns used in some of the 22 robberies investigators attribute to the Aryan Republican Army came from Chevie Kehoe and his father, Kirby Kehoe, according to a story published in *The Spokesman-Review* newspaper on Sunday.

Longswamp Township white supremacist Mark W. Thomas was sentenced last week to eight years in federal prison after admitting to plotting seven robberies and accepting money from them.

Thomas renounced his racist views before the sentencing.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Schwartz, who prosecuted ARA members for robberies that occurred from 1994 through 1996, said last week he recently learned of the group's connection to the Kehoes.

ARA members who cooperated with the FBI confirmed the connection, said Schwartz, of Philadelphia.

Schwartz and another Justice Department source contacted by *The Spokesman-Review* said weapons the gang is believed to have received from the Kehoes include:

■ A Glock .45-caliber handgun that Kevin W. McCarthy, 20, of Philadelphia obtained from Kirby Kehoe. The weapon was used in 1995 bank robberies in Bridgetown, Mo., Madison, Wis., and Sylvania, Ohio;

■ Another .45-caliber pistol once owned by Kirby Kehoe was traded to McCarthy, who later

traded it to Thomas.

Investigators believe Michael Brescia, a 25-year-old ARA member also from Philadelphia, also got firearms from the Kehoes, authorities told the newspaper.

The case is being investigated by the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

"We seized an awful lot of guns from these people (ARA members), and we're still not certain where they all came from," Schwartz said.

Six members of the ARA have been convicted in bank robberies in Ohio, Iowa, Wisconsin, Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas and Kentucky. Investigators believe the robberies netted \$250,000.

Five members are serving prison terms. A sixth, Richard Guthrie, committed suicide after pleading guilty to 19 robberies.

Other ARA members include Peter K. Langan, 39, of Columbus, Ohio, and Scott A. Stedeford, 29, of Ardmore.

Chevie Kehoe and two co-defendants are accused in a federal racketeering indictment in Arkansas of forming a group with similar objectives called the Aryan Peoples Republic.

Chevie Kehoe and co-defendants Faron Lovelace and Danny Lee - also known as Danny Graham - are awaiting trial in Arkansas on the racketeering indictment. Kehoe and Lee also are charged in the robbery and killings of an Arkansas gun dealer and his family on Jan. 11, 1996.

Federal agents declined to say whether any of the weapons stolen from the dealer, William Mueller, are believed to have ended up in the hands of ARA members, *The Spokesman-Review* said.

Kirby Kehoe's lawyer, Mark Casey of Spokane, said he knew of no connection between his client and the ARA.