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Explosives found in former home of Terry Nichols

By JOHN SOLOMON
Associated Press
4/2/2005

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Associated Press file photo
Terry Nichols is serving life prison sentences related to the Oklahoma City bombing.

WASHINGTON - Pursuing a tip that they missed evidence a decade ago, FBI agents searched the former home of convicted Oklahoma City bombing conspirator Terry Nichols and found blasting caps and other explosive materials apparently related to the 1995 attack, officials said Friday.

FBI officials said the material was found buried in a crawl space of the Herington, Kan., home that apparently wasn't checked by agents during the numerous searches of the property during the original investigation of Nichols and Timothy McVeigh.

"The information so far indicates the items have been there since prior to the Oklahoma City bombing," FBI Agent Gary Johnson said in a telephone interview from Oklahoma City.

Nichols, who is serving multiple life prison sentences on federal and state charges, hasn't lived at the property for years, and FBI officials said the tipster provided information that Nichols had buried the evidence.

One of Nichols' attorneys said Friday the discovery was either a hoax or a major failure by the FBI to find all evidence after searching the home numerous times.

"They were there often," said attorney Brian Hermanson, who represented Nichols in last year's Oklahoma state murder trial that ended with Nichols' conviction. "It's surprising. I would think they would have done their job and found everything that was there."

"But I'm still suspicious that it could be something planted there. The house was empty for several years and if somebody wanted to put something there to incriminate Terry they had plenty of time to have done it," Hermanson said.

Johnson said the FBI was still searching the property and trying to determine whether the explosive materials might be connected to the bombing.

He said FBI officials received recent information that led to the search but that the source and origins of the information were still being investigated.

FBI agents went to the property Thursday night and then summoned a bomb squad after finding the potentially dangerous materials, spokesman Jeff Lanza said in Kansas.

Lanza said the material was buried in a crawl space under about a foot of rock, dirt and gravel and the area hadn't been searched during the original investigation.

Nichols and McVeigh, formerly of Pendleton, N.Y., who was put to death for his role in the Oklahoma City bombing, had used blasting caps, fertilizer and fuel to make the bomb that killed 168 people at the federal building in that city on April 19, 1995.

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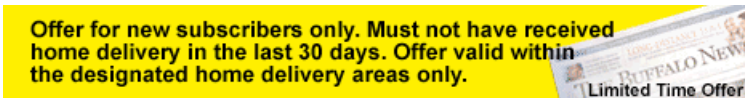
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