

General indicted for role in defense scam

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — A retired four-star Army general was among 10 people indicted Monday in a defense contractor's alleged \$40 million scheme to sell defective parts and falsify tests for military munitions.

Eight were top-level officers of now-defunct Sooner Defense of Florida Inc., including retired Army Gen. Wallace H. Nutting of Biddeford Pool, Maine, the U.S. attorney's office said. The other two were government workers who monitored work at the company for compliance with Defense Department contracts.

Nutting once was chief of the U.S. Southern Command based in Panama and headed the U.S. Readiness Command when he retired in 1985.

"I have spent over 40 years of honorable service to my country in the U.S. Army," said Nutting, 63. He said he has

been cooperating with authorities, will fight the charges and expects to be cleared.

All 10 were indicted on charges of conspiracy. They also were accused of various counts of submitting false claims, wire fraud, money laundering, making false statements, bribery, illegal wiretapping and obstruction of a Defense Department investigation.

The munitions included fuze assemblies for the 25mm cannon shells used in the main weapon on the Army's Bradley Fighting Vehicle and the Marine Corps' Light Armored Vehicle, as well as Navy artillery shells. A fuze is a device for controlling the detonation of explosives.

Investigators said the company made more than 900,000 fuze assemblies.

The 10 allegedly conspired to submit false data and claims,

make military hardware they knew didn't meet contract specifications and devise false testing methods to cheat on Defense Department testing to pass off inferior or altered munitions.

They also were accused of destroying records and diverting federal contract payments for "insider" loans and exorbitant salaries.

The conspiracy count also accuses them of offering bribes and sex, and using intimidation or harassment to lure contracts and stall investigations.

During testing by military units in the United States, there were two accidental explosions of munitions destined for Marine vehicles. There were no injuries, U.S. Attorney Robert Genzman said.

Genzman said steps were taken to ensure that none of the

munitions was shipped to U.S. military personnel in Saudi Arabia during the Persian Gulf war, which came amid the federal investigation into the company.

Indicted were Edward J. Geoghegan, 51, board chairman, chief executive director and president from 1983 until 1988; Nutting, a company officer; and six other directors, managers and supervisors.

Geoghegan was charged in 30 of the 33 counts of the indictment unsealed Monday. If convicted on all counts he would face up to 175 years in prison and \$7 million in fines, Genzman said.

Nutting was charged on four counts. In June 1988, the indictment alleged, he directed Sooner employees to ship a defective lot of fuses to the buying command.

Clock moved back

CHICAGO (AP) — The keepers of the Doodstday Clock are moving back its hands to reflect the decreased threat of global nuclear war, but they won't say how much.

The new setting will appear in the December issue of *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. The clockface appears on the cover each issue and reflects the editors' judgment of how far away the world is from nuclear destruction.

The clock has stood at 11:50 p.m. since March 1990, when it was moved back from 11:54 p.m. to reflect Eastern Europe's revolutionary changes and Mikhail Gorbachev's reformist policies.

During the publication's 46-year history, the clock came closest to nuclear midnight — 11:58 p.m. — in 1953, after the United States tested the hydrogen bomb.

Compromise on civil rights bill sparks anger in women, small businesses

WASHINGTON (AP) — Women and business groups simmered with anger over the bipartisan agreement on civil rights Monday as the Senate grappled with how to cover its own workers under the bill's job protections.

With the main disputes already settled, Senate leaders hoped to have a vote on final passage Tuesday after working through amendments.

One and perhaps more amendments were planned to extend the bill's coverage to include employees of Congress.

Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, was pushing an amendment that would give all Senate employees the right to file job discrimination claims with the Senate Ethics Committee, and if unsatisfied, to seek relief in federal court.

A bipartisan group of senators was pushing an alternative plan that would cover Senate employees not directly involved in legislation and policy matters, while exempting those in policy positions.

As with earlier disputes on the civil rights bill, the full Senate was left waiting while senators met off the floor to try to resolve differences.

President Bush and Senate leaders of both parties reached agreement late last week on a compromise version of the bill that appeared to resolve the politically explosive issue of quotas.

The strength of that agreement could be tested

if Sen. Tim Wirth, D-Colo., proceeds with his plan to offer an amendment that would eliminate the bill's fixed-dollar limitation on damages that could be awarded in cases of sexual discrimination.

Women's groups fiercely opposed those limits, which Democrats said Bush insisted on as a condition of agreeing to the compromise. The bill expands the rights of victims of sexual harassment and discrimination to sue, but it would leave those cases on unequal footing with victims of racial discrimination, for whom limits would not apply.

Those women's groups continued to voice opposition to the limits, but they appeared to be reluctantly accepting the compromise with the promise of Democratic leaders that they would introduce a separate bill to lift those damage limits. The limits range from \$50,000 to \$300,000, depending on the size of the employer.

"We recognize the improvements in the legislation to restore the rights to redress for sexual discrimination," said Patricia Reilly, spokeswoman for the National Women's Political Caucus. "However, we can't support a bill that does not include full equity for women."

Business groups that had opposed the bill before continued to do so, despite Bush's agreement, but none held out serious hope of stopping

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