

'Like John Wayne Movie'

# 5 Hurt, 17 Held In Fort Ord Brawl

By Kevin Howe  
Herald Staff Writer

A brawl that was likened to "an old John Wayne movie" broke out early Friday morning at a Fort Ord enlisted men's club. By the time it was over, 17 people had been arrested, five injured and a score of law enforcement officers from surrounding areas had been called in to quell the disturbance.

In all, 27 officers from six agencies came to quell the disturbance.

Army spokeswoman Reyola Carlisle said a fight broke out on the dance floor of the Rally Point club on Sixth Avenue and B Street at 12:24 a.m. between two men, and the dispute spread into a series of individual fracas as people began leaving the club.

She said a federal police officer stationed at the club called police headquarters for assistance and a call for mutual aid was sent out because of the size of the crowd, estimated at about 200.

"The fight concerned relatively few soldiers," she said, with most of them looking on.

The disturbance was brought quickly under control, according to Mrs. Carlisle, who said seven federal policemen, assisted by neighboring law enforcement officers, arrested 16 soldiers and one civilian at the club.

She said all the soldiers have been released to their units pending charges, and the civilian was also detained and later released.

Those detained may be charged with failure to obey a lawful order and breach of the peace, she said.

Two policemen and three soldiers were injured in the melee, she said, and all were treated for minor injuries at nearby Silas B. Hays Army Hospital and released.

Sheriff's deputies said they received the call for assistance shortly before 12:30 a.m. and patrol cars from both the Monterey and Salinas sheriff's stations as well as the Sand City, Marina and Seaside police departments and the California Highway Patrol began arriving about 10 minutes later.

Sheriff's Capt. Roger Chatterton, patrol commander for the sheriff's department, said the situation was under control about an hour after deputies arrived.

"All we were was physical support," he said, adding that deputies were told at first that about 300 servicemen were involved and had been attacking patrons as they left the club.

Police formed squads to sweep the area around the big concrete-block building, Chatterton said, adding that apparently men from two different units in the 7th Infantry Light Division had begun fighting about "who is the most combat ready. It was like a retake of an old John Wayne movie."

He said the combatants in the melee used their fists only, no weapons, and some fled as police arrived.

Mrs. Carlisle said Army authorities have not determined that the disturbance was sparked by rivalry between division units.

The Rally Point is located near a complex of infantry and engineer battalion barracks and there was "a cross section" of the division in the club when the incident started, she said.

There was no property damage to the club, she said.

Deputies said the last civilian units left the post at 3:20 a.m.

Chatterton said there were no injuries or equipment losses among the 20 officers from the other departments who responded to help Fort Ord police.

Chatterton said 10 of his deputies responded and Highway Patrol Lt. Gary Cameron said two cars and five men were sent shortly before 1 a.m. to Fort Ord from the Salinas-Monterey Highway Patrol station, but their duties were limited to directing traffic as people were leaving the area.

The Marina Public Safety Department sent one man and a police dog to assist in crowd control, another officer came from Sand City and Seaside Police Cmdr. Bill Gullett said three officers from his department also responded.