

Berrigans, six others held in area break-in

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Special to The Inquirer

Activists Philip and Daniel Berrigan and six other demonstrators were arrested yesterday morning and charged with breaking into a General Electric Co. plant in King of Prussia that makes components for intercontinental ballistic missiles.

The Berrigan brothers, who since the late 1960s have engaged in what they call "religious peace activism," were accused of pouring human blood on classified plans and smashing a thermonuclear missile nose cone with hammers.

Upper Merion police said the eight demonstrators forced their way past two unarmed guards at about 6:50 a.m., while plant workers were arriving.

The damage was confined to a single "work area" of the General Electric Operational Manufacturing Center, which builds re-entry systems for the U.S. Air Force Minuteman missile, a GE spokesman said.

Bruce Eckel, an assistant Montgomery County district attorney, said the group caused between \$10,000 and \$40,000 damage. The GE spokesman, Tim Wright, refused to confirm the damage estimate or to give other



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AFTER THE BREAK-IN, Daniel and Philip Berrigan (back row, from left) and two unidentified defendants await hearing.

details of the operation. No injuries were reported.

The Berrigans were held without bail in Montgomery County Prison last night. Bail was set at \$125,000 for each of the other six demonstrators, who included a Roman Catholic priest and a nun.

The nun and another woman were

transferred to a women's prison outside Montgomery County, which has no facilities for female prisoners. All of the men were held in Montgomery County Prison.

The demonstrators told reporters that they were members of Atlantic Life Community. They said it was not

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a religious group, but a coalition opposed to nuclear energy. The break-in, they said, was intended as a demonstration against U.S. "first-strike nuclear capability."

Police said two of the demonstrators held the security guards while the other six, including the Berrigans, went into a "federal government classified work area."

Once inside, they spilled what group members later said was 2½ pints of their own blood onto classified papers and smashed the nose cone of the thermonuclear missile. The blood was carried in plastic bags, the demonstrators said.

Police charged the priest, the Rev. Carl Kabat, with restraining and dragging one of the guards with the aid of the nun, Sister Anne Montgomery.

The work area was in Building Nine, which prosecutors, quoting GE, said was an "experimental development room." Police said that one defendant, in the hearing of a guard, threatened to "shut down Building Nine."

The GE plant has been the target of several peaceful anti-war and anti-nuclear demonstrations during the last year or so, a GE spokesman said.

The eight demonstrators arrested yesterday were charged with burglary, criminal trespassing, criminal conspiracy, disorderly conduct, criminal mischief, simple assault, aggravated assault, terrorist threats, recklessly endangering another person, harassment, false imprisonment, unlawful restraint and criminal coercion.

They were identified as former priest Philip Berrigan, 57, of Baltimore; Jesuit priest Daniel Berrigan, 59, of New York; Dean Hammer, in his 20s, of New Haven, Conn.; Father Kabat, 49, of Baltimore; Elmer Maas, in his 40s, of New York; Sister Anne



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Backers of eight arrested demonstrate outside hearing room

Montgomery, in her 40s, of New York; Molly Rusff, in her 40s, of Pittsburgh, and John Schuchardt, 37, of Baltimore.

The FBI was called in to aid the investigation, according to FBI spokesman Michael Wald. U.S. Attorney Peter Vaira of Philadelphia said his office began an investigation yesterday to determine whether federal charges would be filed against the eight.

Charles A. Glackin of Philadelphia, an attorney representing Daniel Berrigan, requested that Berrigan be released because he was "in extremely poor health" and required constant medical attention. The request was denied by District Justice Francis Lawrence of Norristown.

A preliminary hearing has been set for Monday before District Justice Donald O. Riehl of King of Prussia.

Michael Wehle, 20, of Media, who stood outside the GE building during

the incident holding a bedsheet on which was written an anti-nuclear message, said the group was composed of "resistance people" on the East Coast. When asked the purpose of the demonstration, he said, "It would be a symbol."

All eight people arrested, Wehle said, have been arrested in previous anti-nuclear demonstrations.

In January 1977, Father Kabat, Schuchardt and Philip Berrigan were arrested and accused of creating a "nuisance" within sight of President Carter's home in Plains, Ga.

After the eight were arrested yesterday, three or four refused to return to the building, as requested by police, to be identified by security guards. At police headquarters in Upper Merion Township, they were put into wheelchairs and returned to the site in a police van.