

Clinton: Koresh 'killed those he controlled'

Attorney General comes under fire after FBI effort

WACO, Texas — Some doomsday cultists may have been shot trying to flee "Ranch Apocalypse" before others started the inferno that left scores dead, investigators searching the still-smoldering ruins said Tuesday.

Whatever happened in the final hours at the Branch Davidian compound Monday, federal agents said responsibility for the carnage rests solely with the group's leader, David Koresh.

"He killed those he controlled," President Clinton said at the White House.

Koresh and 85 others were believed to have died in the fire that ended the cult's 51-day standoff with federal agents; there were nine survivors, four of whom remained hospitalized Tuesday.

Investigators began pulling bodies out of the rubble, but were slowed because "ammunition was still cooking and exploding" in the wreckage, said FBI agent Jeff Jamar. Officials said it could take two weeks to gather all the evidence.

Among developments Tuesday:

• The Clinton administration's handling of the case was sharply questioned by victims' relatives and attorneys, politicians and observers worldwide. Clinton defended Attorney General Janet Reno, who approved the FBI effort to use a tank to knock holes in the compound walls and tear-gas the cult members out, but said, "I signed off on this."

Clinton ordered federal agencies to investigate events that led to the fiery end of the standoff. Two congressional investigations also were announced.

• Five cult members who survived the blaze appeared in federal court, wearing orange jail suits and shackled by the ankles. One of them, Remos Avram, told reporters that an FBI tank spraying tear gas into the compound had knocked over a lantern and started the fire, and that the cult had "no plan for suicide."

The FBI said its snipers saw cultists setting blazes and that a survivor told investigators that lantern fluid had been poured throughout the wooden complex.

• Texas Rangers at the compound began investigating the deadly shootouts that erupted at the beginning of the siege, during raids Feb. 28 by federal Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents. Four agents were killed and 16 were wounded while trying to execute search warrants for alleged firearms violations. Koresh had said six cultists also were killed in the shootouts.

• Gov. Ann Richards joined Waco residents at a memorial service in a small downtown church. "Now I think it's time for us to heal," she said.

Waco Habitat for Humanity director Jo Pendleton told the mourners: "The 10 billion words that have been written, the speculations that have been made, the fingers of blame that have been pointed, all make no difference here."

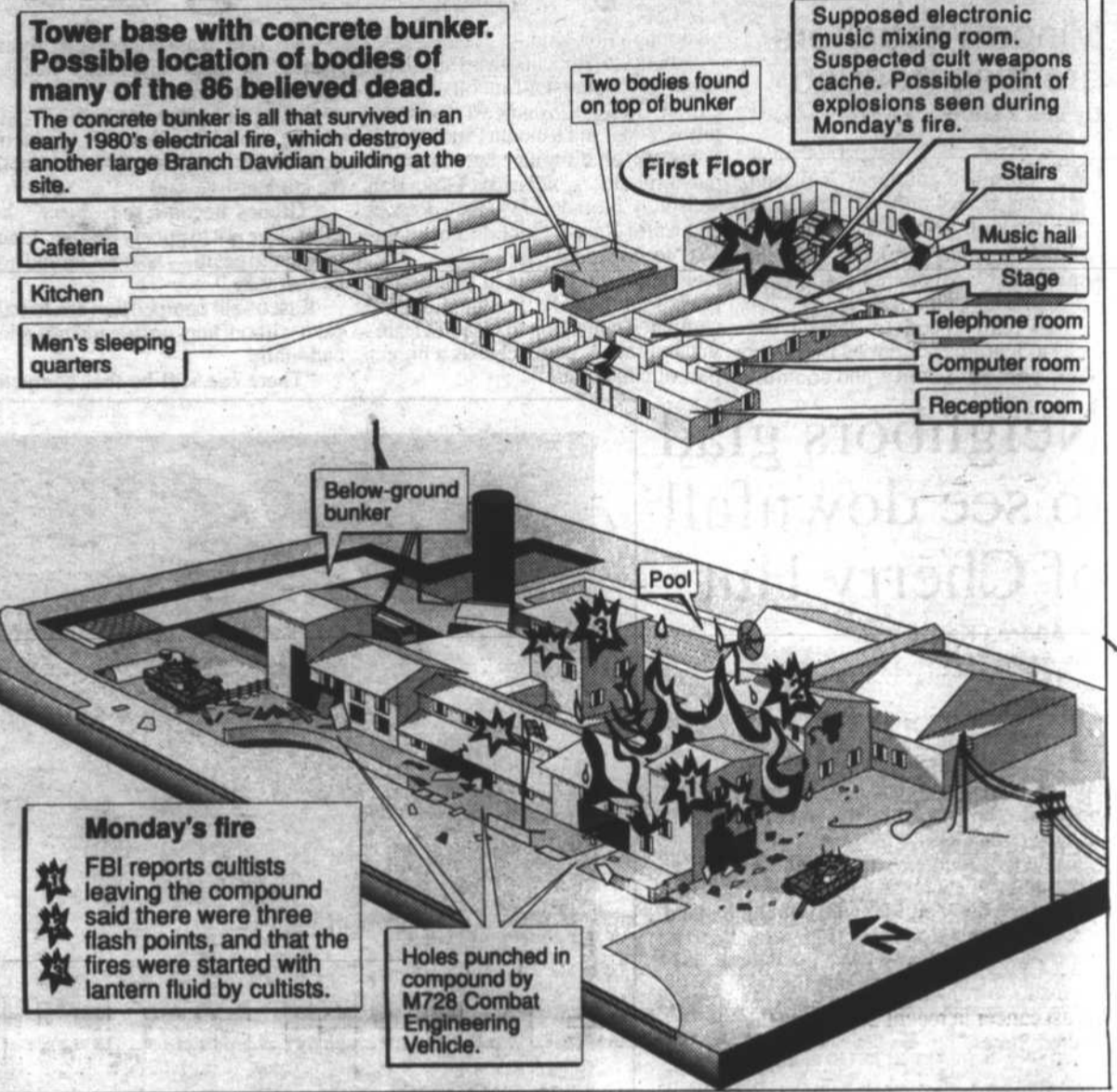
• State officials were trying to determine the best future for surviving children who were made orphans by the fire. Thirty-six people had left the compound after the siege began. The state's Child Protective Services division has custody of 11 of them; 10 others were released to relatives.

"Most of the 21 have lost at least one parent, and some have lost both parents in the fire," said Stewart Davis, a spokesman for the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services.

"We are working to place these children on a temporary and eventually a permanent basis that will be in their own best interests."

The death of a cult

The search continues for bodies of the 86 Branch Davidians believed dead. As many as 24 of the 95 inside the compound at the time of the fire may have been children. Only nine cultists are believed to have survived the fire.



Young victims had no choice, no voice in their deaths

WACO, Texas — They were the innocents. Trapped inside the prairie compound's pink walls, they had no voices, no recourse, no protector.

Seventeen young children had the hour of their deaths dictated by David Koresh, the religious zealot who was father to many of them and who controlled every aspect of their brief existence.

These children "were absolutely under his control," FBI special agent Jeff Jamar told reporters Tuesday in Waco. "Once he decided that this is what he was going to do, he was not going to let them go."

Jamar said the FBI had evidence that some cult members may have been killed inside the Branch Davidian compound before the flames reached them. More than 60 adult cult members, including Koresh, were believed dead in Monday's inferno, and seven older youths are almost certainly among the victims. Eight adults and a 17-year-old girl survived.

From the start, the children were at the center of the standoff. They were the reason the FBI waited almost eight weeks before moving on Koresh, a 33-year-old high school dropout who fathered several infants with women

he claimed as his "wives."

"We thought that their instincts, the motherly instincts would take place and that they would want their children out of that environment," FBI special agent Bob Ricks said Monday.

"That did not occur," he said. "Unfortunately they bunkered down the children the best we can tell, and they allowed those children to go up in flames with them."

Bob Boyd of Child Protective Services in Waco said all the kids brought up by Koresh were "innocent victims."

— 66 — They didn't choose to be there like many of the adults did. It's a horrible tragedy.

—Boyd Child Protective Services agent

"They didn't choose to be there like many of the adults did. It's a horrible tragedy," he said.

Also victims were the 21 children who left the compound in the course of the standoff. Many lost their parents in the flames.

"Anytime that you have to talk to children about the death of their parents, it's difficult," Boyd said. "Children shouldn't have to go through that."

Businesses may have new way to seek tax deductions

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court said Tuesday that newspaper subscribers and other businesses' no-contract customers may be depreciable assets, a ruling that could cost the federal government billions in lost tax dollars.

The court, by a 5-4 vote, said new owners may depreciate and seek tax deductions for such "intangible assets," just like machinery or inventory, if their value and duration can be determined accurately.

In other decisions, the court: • Ruled unanimously that a federal ban on age discrimination does not necessarily bar employers from firing older workers to avoid paying them pensions. The court said in a case from Massachusetts that such fired employees may sue under a federal pension-protecting law.

• Resolved part of an old dispute over apportioning the North Platte River's water by ruling that

the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation may continue diverting some for irrigation use by Nebraska residents.

In the tax case, government lawyers had argued that newspaper subscribers and business customers not under contract are part of a company's "good will" and cannot be depreciated under federal tax law.

But writing for the high court, Justice Harry A. Blackmun said that's a matter best decided on a case-by-case basis.

Blackmun said the Newark Morning Ledger Co. "has borne successfully its substantial burden of proving that 'paid' subscribers' constitutes an intangible asset with an ascertainable value and a limited useful life, the duration of which can be ascertained with reasonable accuracy."

Kim Golightly, an accounting firm tax expert, praised the decision, declaring, "We're talking about tens of billions in deductions."

U.S., German troops to swap soldiers under NATO orders

BRUSSELS, Belgium — The United States and Germany are transferring NATO wartime command of thousands of each other's soldiers in an unprecedented move that will put GIs under German officers and Germans under U.S. orders.

The exchange reflects NATO's need to combine forces into multinational corps given national troop cutbacks. It is also a departure from Washington's traditional reluctance to allow foreign generals to supervise its troops.

"The United States has not in the past designated any of its forces for operations directly under the command of others," said U.S. Army Gen. John Galvin, former chief of European forces for the 16-nation North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

"If the balloon goes up, the plan would be for that division to chop (pass) to the German corps," said Galvin, now at West Point Military Academy in New York.

At Thursday's ceremony in Giebelstadt airfield, about 50 miles southeast of Frankfurt, Germany, the U.S. Army's 1st Armored Division, based at Bad Kreuznach, will be attached to the German army's 2nd Corps. Germany's 5th Panzer Division will go to the U.S. 5th Corps, based in Frankfurt.

The 16,000 to 20,000 troops in each division will not move from their bases. Each multinational corps will total 50,000 to 75,000 soldiers.

Each nation will also assign six bilingual officers to the other's corps headquarters of several hundred personnel. The specialists will take part in training, intelligence, communications and logistics.

"The German division is an equal partner in the planning process of the 5th Corps, which has never been done before," said Lt. Col. Dick Bridges, the corps spokesman. The command arrangement would come into

play during a crisis, when control of national troops is transferred to NATO's chain of command of U.S. and European officers. At the top is U.S. Gen. John Shalikashvili.

In peacetime, the troops remain under national control.

Two other multinational corps are also planned — one German-Dutch and another Danish-German. The command structure of the four multinational units will be in place by 1995.

Mixing units is intended to lessen the burden on NATO nations that can't afford to field as many soldiers as they once did. The multinational units will also be smaller and more flexible.

Mingling U.S. and other allied soldiers with German troops eases the impression that a united Germany, the front-line nation in the Cold War, remains occupied by foreigners. It also continues to link the United States to Europe's security.