Two arrested protesting Draper Lab ‘war research’

By Michael Garry

Two members of Scientists Against War, who were arrested early Friday afternoon by the Cambridge Police during an attempt to block an entrance to Draper Laboratory during a demonstration against guidance system research done there.

The two demonstrators, David W. Siegal and Joseph H. Chassey, were student in chemistry, and Ron Wallace, a physical chemist from New York City were taken to the Third District Court where they were released on ‘disorderly person’ charges.

They were taken into the custody of a probation officer and are expected to reappear at the court on Oct 11, according to court officials.

The demonstrators’ intention was to link arms in front of the entrance to the lab and not move until arrested. Siegal later told The Tech. The police had apparently been under the false impression that the two demonstrators wished to force their way into the lab, he added.

The demonstration began peacefully around noon as about eight members of Scientists Against War Research entered a picket line in front of Draper Lab Building 5 on Osborne Street near MIT. The picketers hoped to confront Draper Lab employees returning from lunch, said one participant.

After four demonstrators gave short speeches to the handful of Draper personnel, Cambridge Police, reporters and passers-by, Wallace and Siegal turned toward the entrance of the lab, indicating their intention to seal it off. They were immediately seized by police, marched, and told their rights.

Wallace, who had delivered a booming and passionate speech earlier, was thrust against a parked car.

Ten minutes later a second pady wagon arrived which escorted the two to Cambridge police headquarters at Central Square where they were booked.

On Monday of last week a circular was distributed around MIT by Scientists Against War Research which stated its intention to hold what was called “an act of nonviolent civil disobedience.” Siegal said that the circular was sent to Albert G. Hill, chairman of the board of Directors of the Lab and MIT Vice President for Research, formally informing him of the group’s plans.

Draper officials responded to the circular, according to Joseph O’Connor, Executive Assistant to the President of Draper Labs, “by notifying the Cambridge police about what it said.” The police were on hand during the entire demonstration.

A Draper Lab official was quoted as saying that he did not question their right to demonstrate, he thought the claims of the Scientists Against War Research were “naive and unrealistic.”

Members of the group declared at the outset of the demonstration that they were aware

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