

Quiet day outside Navy facility where protester lost legs

By Dale Rodebaugh
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The site outside the Concord Naval Weapons Station where a peace activist lost his legs when he was run over by a Navy train was virtually deserted Monday, authorities said.

"There were only a couple of people there and we have no word about demonstrations today. We sent one patrol car to take a look about 9 a.m., but that's been it," said Sgt. Mike Smith of the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department.

Smith said his department had 12 men on standby for a demonstration Sunday, but none on Monday. He said his department now would wait for a call from Marines at the base.

S. Brian Willson, 46, the Vietnam veteran who was struck by the train last Tuesday while leading a protest against alleged arms shipments to Central America, remained in fair condition Monday at John Muir Hospital in Walnut Creek.

A rally Saturday to demonstrate peaceful support for Willson turned violent when 75 of about 5,000 sympathizers dismantled 300 feet of railroad ties and girders.

The demonstrators ignored pleas for non-violence by Willson's wife, Holley Rauhen.

About 50 officers from the Sheriff's Department and the Concord Police Department watched the violence but didn't interfere.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson took part in the rally Saturday. Rosario Murillo, the wife of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, visited Willson in the hospital, but skipped the rally.

The rally Sunday occurred without incident.

Peace activists have been picketing the naval station since June. Willson headed a group of some 30 protesters last Tuesday trying to block the railroad tracks.

Two other protesters, who were on the tracks with Willson when the munitions train approached, managed to jump clear.