

Trains blocked at Concord base

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Protesters blocked munitions trains at the Concord Naval Weapons Station on Tuesday, the day after the station's commander and his public works officer were disciplined by the Navy for failing to take action to avert the maiming of a peace protester.

Capt. Lonnie Cagle, the base commander, and Cmdr. Clayton Ching were disciplined following Admiral's Mast hearings in Washington, D.C., last month, according to a Navy spokeswoman.

The Navy said both men failed to take action that would have prevented injury to S. Brian Willson, a peace demonstrator who lost both legs when he was run over by a train at the base Sept. 1.

Vice Adm. William Rowden, who conducted the hearings, also concluded "Willson and other protesters deliberately" violated state law by obstructing the railroad tracks "in the face of an oncoming U.S. Navy train, but nevertheless the commanding officer could have taken additional precautions to ensure the safe operation of the train," the Navy spokeswoman said.

An Admiral's Mast hearing is a step below a court-martial, and was described by the spokesman as an administrative evaluation of an officer's performance of duty.

Both Cagle and Ching declined comment on the disciplinary actions, said station spokesman Dan Tikalsky. Cagle received a letter of admonition and Ching a letter of reprimand. A letter of admonition is considered less severe than a reprimand, Tikalsky said.

Willson is part of the Nuremberg Action Group, based at the Mount Diablo Peace Center in Walnut Creek, which is protesting U.S. arms shipments to the Contra rebels in Central America. It has been staging daily demonstrations at the base for five months.

Tuesday, two demonstrators from the group were injured when their arms were twisted by deputies removing them from the tracks, according to spokesmen for the protesters and the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department.

None of the 26 protesters was arrested. The protesters, including peace activist Daniel Ellsberg,

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