

WARS - Gulf War Demonstrations

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Street sit-in leads to arrests in Santa Cruz

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Police at the University of California, Santa Cruz on Thursday arrested 34 students who blocked a main campus intersection as part of a protest against the Persian Gulf war.

The hourlong confrontation, which ended without injury, marked the largest number of arrests in any demonstration in Santa Cruz since the war started Jan. 16.

The demonstrators were cited on a minor infraction and released within two hours.

Shortly after noon, several hundred students congregated at McLaughlin and Hagar drives, near the Bay Tree Bookstore. About 75 sat in the street, a central campus intersection.

The students, participants in a one-day campus shutdown and blockade, chanted slogans against the war and against the role of the University of California in conducting defense-related research at such facilities as the Livermore and Los Alamos weapons laboratories.

"Money for books not for war, UC out of Livermore," the crowd cheered as police

from three local agencies rolled up.

With about 20 officers from the Santa Cruz Police Department and county sheriff's department assisting, campus police dragged the students, one by one, to buses, where they were handcuffed and taken downtown.

A Santa Cruz County Jail spokesman said that once at the jail, the demonstrators elected to be cited and released on their own recognizance, rather than booked.

"I'm here to send a message to the government that I believe in America but

I believe this war shouldn't be happening," said junior Malherb Blizaire, a political science student who was one of the first arrested.

In the end, campus police decided the arrests were a waste of time and gave up. For every person dragged off, two bystanders sat down in the street.

"They made their point, we made ours," UC-Santa Cruz Police Chief Gene Stone said. "Hell, we'll just have to direct traffic around them."

That decision didn't sit well with some city police and sheriff's deputies, who

complained that campus administrators should have committed to clearing the roadway properly or not bothered to call them at all.

But after police began leaving and the excitement was over, most of the students cheered, got up and left.

Stone said campus agencies would tally the costs for police overtime and equipment, expected to total several thousand dollars, and divide by the number of people arrested. They will be sent bills.

"And if they don't pay, they don't graduate," he said, shrugging.