

12:30-6 p.m.

thing from a sushi eating contest to Japanese

...drew almost 5,000.

War-crime suspect arrested on Beach

By JEFF LEEN
Herald Staff Writer

A 72-year-old fugitive accused of being a Nazi war criminal was in custody at the Krome Avenue detention center Saturday, a day after U.S. marshals found him hiding in a hotel on Miami Beach, home of the nation's second largest group of Holocaust survivors.

Conrad Kalejs is accused of being a senior lieutenant at the Salaspils concentration camp in his native Latvia. He also allegedly directed the destruction of the Latvian village of Sanniki and the slaughter of its residents in March 1942.

Kalejs was a member of the "Arajs Kommando," which was used by the Nazis to exterminate "those persons considered to be racially undesirable and enemies of Germany," according to a Justice Department statement.

Kalejs was alone when marshals, assisted by Metro-Dade police, arrested him at about

7:30 p.m. Friday, said Bill Dempsey, spokesman for the U.S. Marshals Service office in McClean, Va. He was unarmed and offered no resistance.

"He was a little old man," said Alfons Balodis, 71, who rented a room to Kalejs at Rosemary Apartments, 8118 Harding Ave. "A very simple little old man."

Neither Balodis nor federal spokesmen could say what led Kalejs to Miami Beach. He had stayed for six days in a \$25-a-day hotel room where he was arrested.

Balodis, who is also Latvian, said he first met Kalejs 27 years ago in Michigan, but did not know of Kalejs' past and did not even know Kalejs' name when marshals came for him.

Balodis said Kalejs wore plain slacks and shorts and left the 13-unit apartment to go shopping but not to the beach.

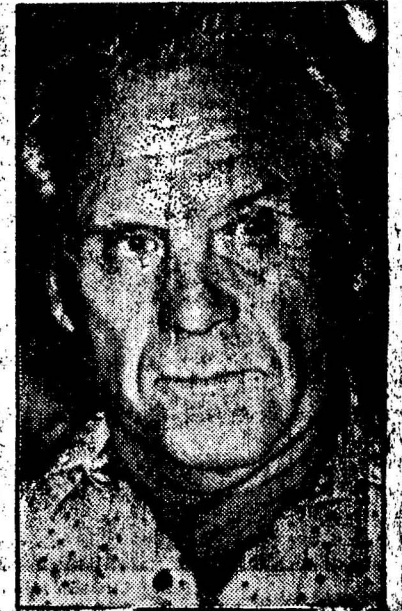
"He'd say good morning," Balodis said.

"He had very bad legs. Swollen feet. Bad circulation. He couldn't walk on the beach."

Kalejs' last known address was St. Petersburg.

On Feb. 22, a warrant was issued for Kalejs after he failed to appear at a deportation hearing in Miami, Dempsey said. The Justice Department statement accused Kalejs of "misrepresenting material facts upon admission to the United States" by stating he was a laborer during the war.

Kalejs was not the first alleged Nazi to be found living among the largely Jewish population on Miami Beach. In 1977, the Justice Department went to court to deport Feodor Fedorenko, a former guard at the Treblinka concentration camp. The year before, Fedorenko had moved to Miami Beach. In 1981, Fedorenko was stripped of his U.S. citizenship and deported to the Soviet Union.



Conrad Kalejs: Accused of war crimes in Latvia.

MIAMI HERALD