

Pair of Arthur Kill inmates tunnel their way to freedom

By MICHAEL AZZARA JR.

Two inmates of the Arthur Kill Correctional Facility in Charlestown escaped early yesterday by tunneling under one fence, climbing over a second and then speeding away in a waiting car, officials said.

The pair, both of Queens, had evidently planned the escape with people outside the prison, according to Louis Ganim, a spokesman for the medium-security facility.

Ganim said bloodhounds picked up their scent and followed it to a spot on Arthur Kill Rd. a short distance from the prison. Many footprints were found there, indicating that one or more persons had been standing there waiting for them, he added.

The escapees are John Nappi, 26,

and Daniel Chiarello, 29. Nappi was convicted of attempted armed robbery, and Chiarello was serving time for armed robbery.

According to New York City police, a guard said he saw both men in bed, apparently asleep, during a bed check at 2 a.m. At 2:30 the guard became suspicious and pulled the blankets off the beds of both men, discovering their disappearance. Police did not say what made the guard suspicious.

The prison was searched and two shovels were found alongside a hole dug under the prison's inner fence. The pair apparently climbed over the second fence, Ganim said. The prison spokesman also said that both are chain-linked fence, topped with either barbed or razor wire. They are 12 feet high.

State police believe the pair is still in the New York City area. A joint task force consisting of state police and Correctional Department officers has been formed to search for the escaped convicts.

Nappi entered the prison in February 1978, sentenced to five to 10 years. He had at least two years left to serve.

Chiarello, sentenced to zero to 15 years, went before the parole board earlier this month and was denied parole. Instead, he was told to return before the board next year for consideration. He entered the prison in July 1978.

The prison was originally constructed as a drug rehabilitation center beginning in mid-1968.

The center officially became the (Continued on Page 4)

