

the world

Man reaching end of record trans-sea flight

United Press International
FALMOUTH, England — Gerry Speiss Monday neared landfall at the end of an epic trans-Atlantic crossing at the helm of the smallest vessel ever to sail the 3,000-mile span.

Fanned by a fair westerly breeze local seafarers term "a soldier's wind," Speiss, 39, of White Bear, Minn., and his 10-foot sailboat Yankee Girl were estimated late this afternoon to be less than 60 nautical miles from England.

He was reported waiting in a fog bank off the English Channel for the mist to clear.

"By my estimation he should get into port around tea-time on Tuesday if the weather conditions stay as they are at present," said a local Falmouth Coast Guard official. "The wind out there is 3 to 4 knots westerly and it's a slight sea."

The official said, "It's what we call a soldier's wind hereabouts, brings you home in a straight line with no trouble. Three to four knots is the equivalent of a marching pace."

But for Speiss, who has been at sea 53 days, sailing toward shore on a soldier's wind is the culmination of a long ambition to navigate the smallest vessel ever across the Atlantic.

He spent more than two years building the miniature yacht specifically for the 3,000-mile journey and put his job as an electronics engineer to make the trip. The boat is equipped with a four-horsepower auxiliary motor and a 14-foot sail.

He set out almost unheralded from Virginia Beach, Va., on June 1, calling his long, lonely trip "a challenge pure and simple" and hoping to complete the journey in 60 days.

Unlike most trans-Atlantic sailors

he shunned publicity, but he agreed to an article in the local paper under the condition it would not be published until the day he sailed.

Waiting to greet him at Falmouth are his parents and his wife, Sally, 37, who feared the last 100 miles through the crowded shipping lanes of the English Channel would be the most dangerous.

Tankers collide; oil spill surveyed

United Press International
CROWN POINT, Tobago — Two crippled, fire-swept supertankers Monday were being towed to port where officials hoped to determine how much of their 3.5 million barrels of oil had spilled into the Caribbean.

The 292,666-ton Atlantic Empress and the 210,257-ton Aegean Captain, both Liberian-registered and Greek-owned, collided during a tropical rainstorm at dusk Thursday off Crown Point, between the islands of Tobago and Grenada.

Twenty-nine people — all but one from the Atlantic Empress — were missing and presumed dead.

Fifty-one others, including three women passengers, survived.

Officials at first feared that all of the 3.5 million barrels of oil aboard both tankers had leaked into the Caribbean, which would have made the accident the world's worst oil spill.

A last-minute maneuver by the Aegean Captain apparently minimized the impact of the collision, resulting in damage to only some of the ship's storage holds. Officials believe most of the oil from Atlantic Empress was burned off during the conflagration.

The cause of the accident was not yet determined.

Piskopianos Christos, the second officer in command of the bridge on the Aegean Captain, said Sunday that he noticed the other ship suddenly just before the collision and, according to the old law of the sea, immediately started turning left in the hope the Atlantic Empress would do the same so they would miss each other.

"It was too late. They didn't react to this condition," Christos said.

The right part of the bow of the Aegean Captain struck a glancing blow to the Atlantic Empress midway on its left side and both ships burst into flame. The captains of both vessels immediately gave orders to abandon ship.

"If we had rammed the other ship straight into the side, there would have been a big explosion and a 100 percent loss," Christos said.

The Atlantic Empress, still burning and listing, was being towed by two German tugboats. The Aegean Captain was also under tow but has a skeleton crew of about 10 officers aboard trying to repair the damage.

No one will know exactly how much oil spilled until the remainder is pumped out. Officials estimate it is probably less than one third of the total combined cargo, about a million barrels or less.

Whatever spilled out is not drifting

ashore anywhere for the moment but merely floating around on the current in the Tobago channel, where three planes and four boats were spraying dispersant chemicals in an attempt to break it up.

The evacuation from the Aegean Captain was orderly and resulted in the loss of only one life, but panic broke out on the Atlantic Empress, which was enveloped in flames, and crew and passengers jumped into the flaming sea in a mad scramble.

The Atlantic Empress was en route from the Persian Gulf to Beaumont, Texas, fully loaded with Iranian crude for the Mobil Corp.

Nicaraguan festivity marred; men spray hotel with bullets

United Press International
MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Suspected supporters of ousted dictator Anastasio Somoza sprayed a hotel housing Nicaragua's new junta with machine-gun fire, marring a weekend of victory fiestas honoring the 3-day-old revolutionary regime.

The Junta of National Reconstruction Sunday began drafting a plan that would include a law nationalizing all banks in Nicaragua and called on the populace to return to their offices, factories and stores.

The shooting Sunday at the Camino Real Hotel broke out during a meeting between junta members and Sandinista guerrilla leaders. Two truckloads of gunmen raked the hotel with machine gun

fire, wounding two Sandinista guards who returned the attackers' fire.

Only minutes before the shooting, Commander Daniel Ortega-Saavedra, the only guerrilla on the five-member ruling junta, said the leaders would create a new army to protect Nicaragua against Somoza-inspired counter revolution.

It marked the first major clash since the guerrillas overthrew Somoza and stop-gap president Francisco Urcuyo last week. Somoza, 53, whose family ruled Nicaragua for four decades, fled to Miami Beach last Tuesday.

Ortega-Saavedra told UPI the junta is also drafting a law to nationalize all banks in Nicaragua, in-

cluding the U.S.-owned Bank of America, in order to stop a flight of capital from the country.

"This is an elementary measure for a ruined country," Ortega-Saavedra said. "We have to stop this potential capital flight, like what happened under Somoza when millions of dollars were taken out."

Sandinista sources said two other violent outbursts, probably instigated by pro-Somoza forces, were quickly suppressed by the new police.

Weekend celebrations wound up Sunday with 50,000 people participating in Masaya, the strategic city 16 miles southeast of the capital

held by rebels under constant national guard bombardment for more than a month.

Sandinista radio urged accountants, teachers and public works engineers to meet and discuss the rebuilding of the war-devastated nation. The first crews of "reconstruction brigades" Sunday began repairing streets, water mains and telephone wires.

The junta over the weekend issued its first major decrees, eliminating Somoza's hated national guard and declaring it will appropriate the former dictator's personal property, estimated at 7 percent of the national wealth.

More twins successfully separated

United Press International
BANGKOK, Thailand — Doctors have successfully separated a pair of Siamese twins, but one of the infants is having difficulty breathing, and is given only a 20 percent chance of survival, hospital officials said Monday.

The female twins, joined from the chest to the navel with connecting hearts and livers, were separated in a 13-hour operation Sunday by an 18-member surgical team at Bangkok's Hua Chiao Hospital.

The director of the hospital, Dr. Pichaisanit, told a news conference one of the babies was in satisfactory condition but the other was having severe respiratory problems.

"I am afraid the baby may not survive for too long. Her chances of survival are now considered less than 20 per cent," he said.

Mexico to limit gas sales, says Portillo cabinet official

United Press International
MEXICO CITY — Mexico will not sell huge quantities of natural gas to the United States, a member of President Jose Lopez Portillo's cabinet says.

Jose Andres de Oteyza, Minister of Patrimony and Industrial Development, in an interview Sunday with the newspaper Uno Mas Uno, said the amount of natural gas to be sold will be decided when Presidents Carter and Lopez Portillo meet in Washington in September.

He said Mexico would sell to the U.S. only surplus natural gas not used domestically. De Oteyza said the price will be based on the "spectacular" price increases in petroleum and its by-products in recent months.

Talks on gas sales between the United States and Mexico resumed in February after Carter visited Lopez Portillo in Mexico City.

In 1977, negotiations collapsed when the United States refused to pay Mexico more than \$2.16 per thousand cubic feet, the price paid for Canadian gas. Mexico insisted on \$2.60.

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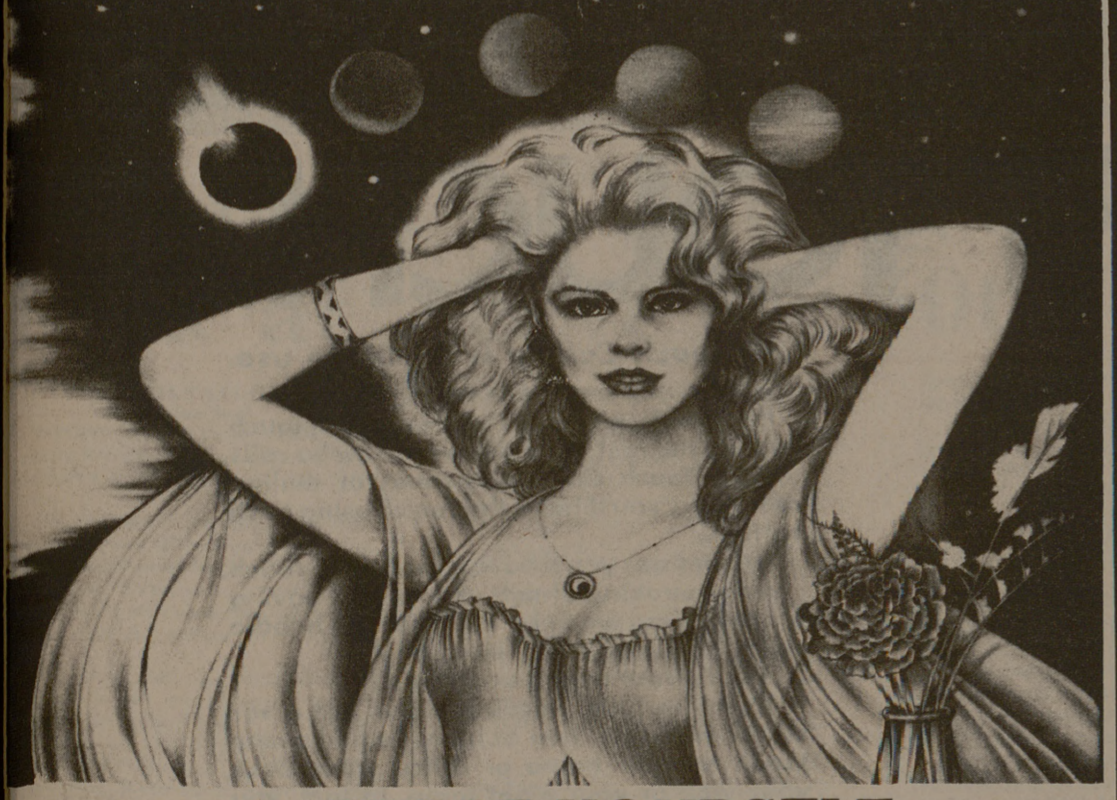
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