

National briefs

Air Force tanker plane crash kills five

United Press International

MERCED, Calif. — An Air Force KC-135 stratotanker plane crashed and burst into flames while practicing touch-and-go landings at Castle AFB, killing four officers and a master sergeant.

An Air Force spokesman said the plane was practicing the maneuver, in which the pilot lands and then takes off without stopping, when the crash occurred shortly after noon Wednesday.

Killed were Capt. George W. Ziegler, 31, Las Cruces, N.M.; Capt. Earle B. Squier, 29, Proctor, Vt.; Capt. Milton O. Buchanan, 37, Abilene, Texas; Capt. Mark L. Dobbs, 30, San Antonio, Texas; and Senior Master Sgt. Albert L. Evans, 46, Longview, Wash.

Carter orders striking rail workers back to jobs

WASHINGTON — President Carter Thursday ordered striking employees back to work on the Rock Island Railroad for a 60-day cooling off period.

The 3-week-old strike against the bankrupt Rock Island line has tied up massive grain shipments in the Midwest and slowed movement of other goods in 14 states served by the railroad.

"The strike is having a severe economic effect on farmers throughout the central part of the United States," he said, adding that it also would eventually hurt consumers.

Bill signed to outlaw newsroom searches

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — Gov. James R. Thompson has signed into law a bill to outlaw search warrants issued to seize news reporters' notes or materials used in the routine gathering of the news.

Thompson said the measure, sponsored by Rep. Alan J. Greiman, D-Skokie, "will help guarantee the news media protection from harassment in their work as the watchdogs they are entitled to be under the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment."

Greiman said he offered the bill in response to a U.S. Supreme Court decision that upheld a lower court ruling on the issuance of a warrant for the search of the Stanford University newspaper.

U.S., Mexico resume talks on proposed natural gas sale

United Press International

WASHINGTON — The United States and Mexico resumed their deadlocked natural gas negotiations, but the State Department made clear neither side is under pressure to reach agreement before this month's U.S.-Mexican summit.

Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher left for Mexico Wednesday for further talks on the sale of Mexican natural gas to the United States and other issues on the U.S.-Mexican agenda.

Christopher's second trip to Mexico City in less than a month came just a week before the Sept. 28-29 state visit to Washington of Mexican president Jose Lopez Portillo.

State Department spokesman Hodding Carter stressed Lopez Portillo's visit is not directly related to the natural gas issue and will go forward — whether or not an agreement is reached before his arrival in Washington.

"These talks are expected to cover a number of issues and I don't want to stress the natural gas issue because it would in fact simply over-emphasize what is one function of many on this trip," Carter said.

"The talks about a natural gas agreement have proceeded independently of the president's visit here. That continues to be the case."

The spokesman expressed the hope, however, that "we will, in due course, reach an agreement with Mexico. Whether that might come before or after President Lopez Portillo's visit is something I am unable to predict."

Lopez Portillo will be in Washington for his third meeting with President Carter. It will be his second state visit to Washington since February 1977. The two leaders met in Mexico City earlier this year.



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Foreigners own 0.5 percent of U.S. farmland, Bergland says

United Press International

WASHINGTON — Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland estimated Thursday foreign investors own about 4 million acres of U.S. farmland, less than 0.5 percent of privately owned farmland.

Foreign holdings are heavily concentrated in the South and West, with 27 percent of foreign-owned acreage reported in Georgia, South Carolina and Tennessee, Bergland said. But holdings were reported in all 50 states.

The estimate was based on a preliminary review of 4,500 reports filed by foreign investors under a new law which requires foreign owners of U.S. farms and forest land to register their holdings with the federal government.

Citizens of the United Kingdom, Luxembourg, West Germany and Canada hold 72 percent of all foreign-owned land reported, Bergland said in releasing the information during a trip to Texas.

The study showed that fewer than 2,000 acres are owned by Arabs. The new law required foreign

owners or their agents to register their land at an Agriculture Department office in the county where the land is located by Aug. 1. New purchases are to be reported within 90 days.

As of Sept. 1, more than 5,000 forms had been received in Washington. Three-fifths of the reports, accounting for 2.69 million acres, have been analyzed by Agriculture Department economists and statisticians.

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