

Refinery may have unusual cancer rate

United Press International
BEAUMONT — A spot survey by the National Cancer Institute suggests workers at the local Mobil Oil Corp. refinery may suffer an abnormal cancer death rate, but researchers say the statistics require detailed study.

Officials said a research error in the study, described as "hypothesis generating," omitted Mobil from an earlier report naming Texaco Inc. and Gulf Oil Corp. facilities in Port Arthur as possible high cancer risk sites.

The error had involved dividing findings for the same Beaumont refinery between Mobil and the refinery's former owner, Magnolia Petroleum Co., which merged with Mobil in 1959, officials said.

NCI researchers — who have checked a cross-section of death certificates at 3,105 American refineries and petrochemical plants between 1947 and 1977 — surveyed 198 death certificates at the 2,200-worker Mobil refinery.

They said they found five brain and central nervous system cancers, which they said was about three times the expected rate among all Americans, and 22 lung cancer deaths, about twice the expected rate.

"We certainly want to know if there is a problem," said Don Maroldy, Mobil's labor relations manager in New York City. "The study was termed a tentative hypothesis and seems to lead to the necessity for further study."

Although Mobil officials said the survey covered a small sample, Maroldy said, "We view the findings as a signpost saying maybe something is at the end of the road. We'd like to know if anything, in fact, is there."

Maroldy said he expected Mobil to supply cancer institute researchers with detailed health records and other data needed to determine actual dangers and "we will probably be meeting soon with NCI to discuss methodology."

Officials investigate scheme that smuggled aliens by air

United Press International
SAN DIEGO — U.S. officials today began separate investigations into an aerial alien-smuggling scheme allegedly masterminded by a U.S. Customs Service pilot and a Federal Aviation Administration air traffic controller, both of whom are currently imprisoned in Tijuana, Mexico.

The pair combined their knowledge of law enforcement, air traffic patterns and radar monitoring systems along the California-Mexico border to avoid detection, according to Mexican Federal Judicial Police in Tijuana, Mexico.

Mexican citizens were charged \$300 apiece for transportation from a rarely used dirt airstrip near Tecate, Mexico, to the Los Angeles suburb of Torrance, Mexican authorities said.

The pair made as many as four flights a week in a small airplane rented from Brown Field near San Diego, the officials said. It was not known how long the operation had been in operation.

Charles R. Gregore, 33, a Customs Service pilot whose job was to sight and chase planes smuggling drugs across the border, and Ronald L. Anderson, an FAA air traffic controller assigned to Miramar Approach Control near San Diego, were arrested near the Tecate airfield.

Walsh said, however, "If they are prosecuted in Mexico, they're still subject to a subsequent prosecution in the United States."

Mexico has no extradition treaty with the United States although Mexican officials have occasionally turned over prisoners to U.S. authorities at the border.

While an official said the U.S. Customs Service would also investigate the matter, he was only vaguely familiar with the case.

"It is our understanding that the Federal District Attorney has 72 hours to file charges," Garvis said. "At this moment, to our knowledge, no formal charges have been filed by the Mexicans."

Carvis, the FAA's Western Region spokesman in Los Angeles, said Wednesday.

The FAA has been in contact with the U.S. Consulate's office in Tijuana, which reported that the case was turned over to the Mexican Federal District Attorney's office in Tijuana Tuesday, he said.

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No arrests, but killing 'solved'

United Press International
SAN ANTONIO — Homicide detectives Wednesday said they have "solved" the death of a Holmes High School sophomore they claim was fatally beaten by members of a rival clique. However, no arrests can be made until a prosecutor and medical examiner resolve a controversy over cause of death.

Officers found William "Billy" Barnett, 15, lying dead in a yard near his home moments after two witnesses said they saw six other youths who shouted "redneck" knock him to the ground and kick him in the head.

Detective Joe Oosterveen blamed the attack on tension between two social cliques of "kickers" and "pot heads" in the school.

But Dr. Ruben Santos, Bexar County Medical Examiner, ruled "death by natural causes," saying the dead youth suffered from a congenital aneurysm and that the blows to the head the boy suffered were not sufficient to have killed a healthy person.

"We'll consider the medical examiner's ruling along with all the other facts in making our determinations," said Charles Conaway of the district attorney's office.

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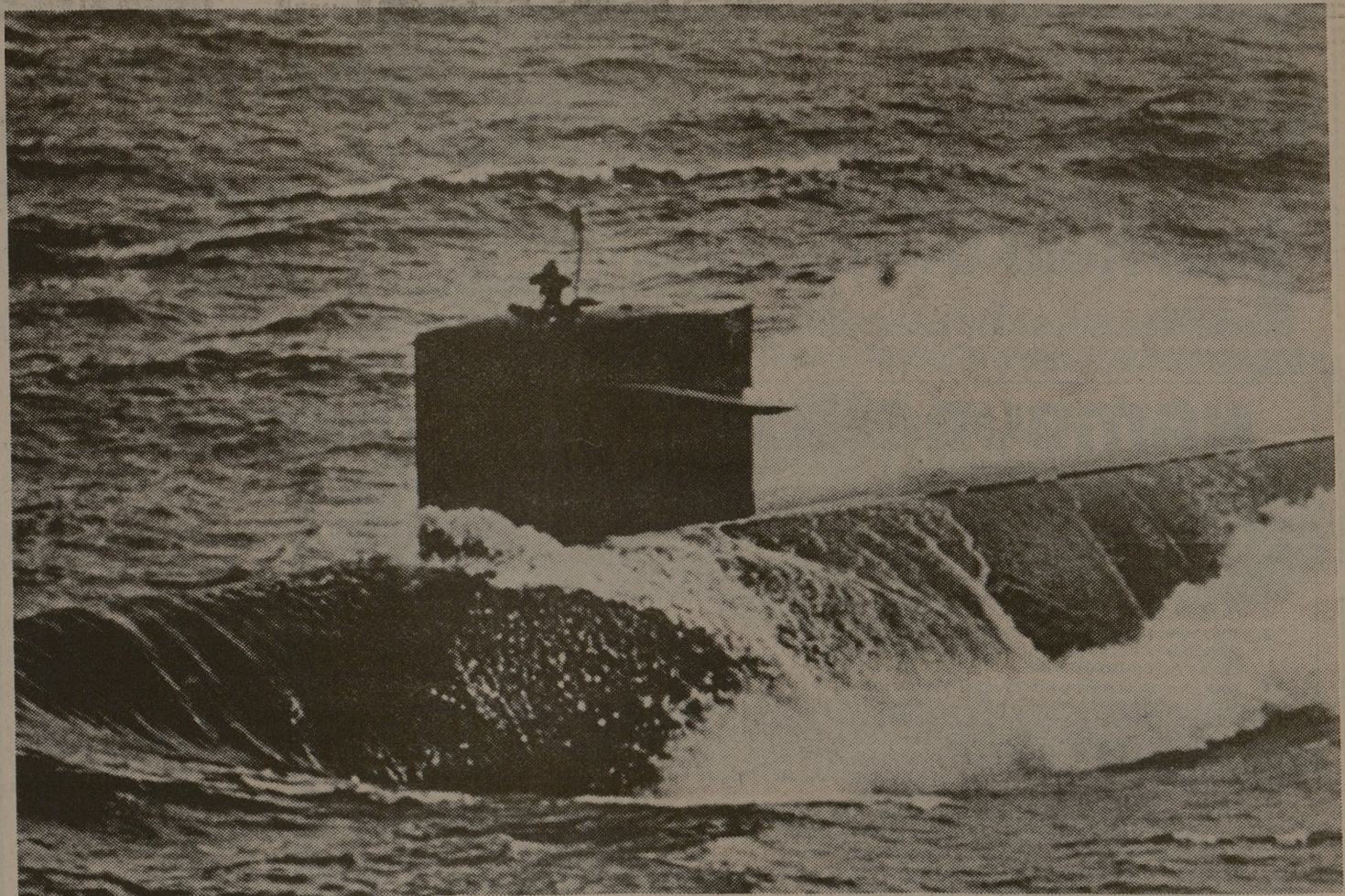
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