

State / National

Ex-hostage threatened

United Press International
FORT WORTH — Johnny McKeel, the most outspoken former hostage in Iran, said jealous Vietnam veterans had threatened his life, but he didn't take the warnings seriously.
McKeel said Saturday he had received letters warning him to curtail his public appearances or face death.
"Most of them say I should go

on TV and call an end to the TV coverage I've been getting," McKeel said.
"Just a whole lot of them stated they were Vietnam vets and they didn't receive all the parades and publicity when they came home. I don't take them seriously," he said.
His family was concerned, however.
Police in McKeel's hometown

of Balch Springs, the Dallas County sheriff's office and the FBI in Dallas all reported they were not aware of death threats against the Marine sergeant freed Jan. 20 after 444 days in captivity in Iran.
When McKeel was briefly housed at West Point after arriving back in the United States with the other hostages, he drew laughs from reporters who asked about his priorities.
"I know the Marines just want to get back to chasing some women and drinking beer," he said.

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Gromets of Texas A&M University sponsored its annual Warcon competition from Friday to Sunday afternoon. Here, (clockwise from left), Jeff Carter, Sidney Dane, Jim Douglas

and Larry Trimble enjoy Diplomacy. The annual event featured players from across the United States. It's the only place where you don't get killed.

Atlanta gets federal task force

United Press International
ATLANTA — Spurred by the personal concern of President Reagan, the White House announced Saturday establishment of a federal task force to help find the child slayer who has terrorized Atlanta's black neighborhoods for the past 19 months.
Vice President George Bush,

who made the announcement in Washington, said Reagan had been informed the list of dead or missing children had grown to 20 with the addition of two more names Friday.

"The president expressed his deep concern about the continuing wave of deaths and disappearances," deputy press secretary Larry Speakes said in Santa Barbara, Calif., where President Reagan is spending the weekend.
"He reiterated his desire that the administration be as helpful as possible to the city officials there. He concurred with the decision by the vice president to establish this

on-site task force," Speakes said.
Bush said the Atlanta-based task force would be headed by Charles Rinkevich, 40, a Justice Department official now serving as director of the Atlanta area Audit and Investigation Office of the Office of Juvenile Assistance.

The vice president said the task force will "augment and assist local authorities through community assistance and health services programs in addition to programmatic and technical assistance for the investigation."

Meanwhile, police FBI agents and volunteers aided by tracking dogs fanned out in two wide-ranging searches Saturday looking for clues in the baffling case.

An estimated 350 searchers that included Georgia Congressman Wyche Fowler and Marine reservists split into two groups. One group searched near a public housing project where 13-year-old Curtis Walker disappeared two days ago. A second band of volunteers and officers returned to southwest Atlanta, where many of the victims' bodies have been found.

Of the 20 victims involved, the bodies of 18 have been found, and two children are officially listed as missing.

Each group of searchers compiled a list and a description of the clothes of last worn by the child, 10-year-old Darron Glass.

One group found some bones, but first indications were they were animal, rather than human bones.

While the searches were in progress, funeral services were held for Jeffrey Mathis, 10, who vanished last March. The skeletal remains were found Feb. 13 in southwest Atlanta.

The 19th weekend of intensive searches by volunteers was spread by Walker's disappearance two days ago and the appearance of the name of 10-year-old Wyche to the list of murdered children.

Walker vanished Thursday afternoon after leaving his home against his mother's orders. Tracking dogs traced him to a school parking lot where the trail ended.

Wyche's body was found June beneath a bridge. His death at first was ruled accidental, but a head injury suffered in a fall from the bridge. But Friday, after a national investigation, authorities reclassified it as a homicide and listed asphyxiation as the cause of death.

All of the victims have been black children between the ages seven and 15. Most have come from broken homes in poor sections of the city. Many, including Walker, were described as "streetwise" kids, looking for ways to earn money.

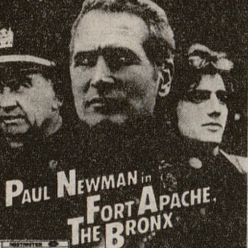
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Man, 94, begins high school work

United Press International
George Drew's days are filled with book learnin' these days. At 94, the spritely gentleman farmer is in hot pursuit of his high school diploma.

The Oklahoman was too busy raising 14 children and tending his farm work when he was younger to complete his education. More than a decade ago, he started back, determined to catch up on everything he'd missed since dropping out after the 10th grade.

"All the children left home figured I'd go back to school and learn," he said. "I like school. It's not too difficult, but I do have homework every day. I study nights."

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