

Drilling ship hearings reopened

United Press International
 HOUSTON — The U.S. Coast Guard Wednesday reconvened its hearing into the October sinking of a drilling ship near Vietnam amid a report that one of the 81 crew members presumed dead was seen alive in a Vietnamese prison.

Also Wednesday, an official with Houston-based Global Marine Inc., which owns the Glomar Java Sea, testified he ignored a request from the captain of the ship to increase staffing aboard the vessel during the typhoon season because he considered it unimportant.

Austin attorney Douglas Pierce, the father of missing crewman John Pierce, said he has received a letter from a Vietnamese refugee who claims to have seen his son and five

other Americans in a prison in Da Nang on Nov. 19 after the Glomar Java Sea sank Oct. 25 in the South China Sea during Typhoon Lex.

Divers located the bodies of 34 crewmen. The other 47 are presumed dead.

Pierce said Vietnamese industrial engineer Nguyen Hun Chanh, 35, who is now in a refugee camp in the Philippines awaiting a move to California, sent him the letter after seeing one of several advertisements Pierce placed in South East Asia publications which displayed his son's photograph and offered a reward for any information about his fate.

"I confirm to you that your son, when I met, looked exactly like in the picture," Chanh's letter read.

The information contradicts a U.S. State Department conclusion that there is no evidence of survivors.

"I believe him because he's someone I can touch, reach and smell. Secondly, he doesn't want any money and he already has a sponsor for himself and his family California," Pierce said.

"I am convinced my son is alive and I'm going to do everything possible to find him."

Pierce said he has hired an American-based international security firm to investigate Chanh's claim and to try to locate the Vietnamese prison where he believes his son and others may be held.

Chanh's letter, translated into English by two Vietnamese people, said

the Americans were questioned at the Da Nang prison and then moved to Hanoi.

Pierce said if he is able to confirm his son's location in Vietnam, he will do "whatever is necessary to get him out."

Pierce disclosed the letter as officials of the Coast Guard and the National Transportation Safety Board reconvened three days of hearings into the cause of the sinking of the Glomar Java Sea. The board has held three previous hearings in Houston and Hong Kong.

The cause of the sinking has not been determined, although divers found cracks in the hull of the drilling ship. Officials, however, said a final ruling is not likely for several months.

NASA picks crew for Oct. 1 shuttle

United Press International
 WASHINGTON — A Navy oceanographer has been added to the space shuttle flight scheduled to begin Oct. 1, raising the number of crew members to a record seven, the space agency announced Wednesday.

NASA said Paul D. Scully-Power, 40, has joined the four men and two women preparing for the eight-day mission. Scully-Power is a native of Australia and now works as a civilian scientist at the Naval Underwater Systems Center at New London, Conn.

The shuttle Challenger is

scheduled to fly farther north and south as it orbits Earth than most missions and thus will give Scully-Power a unusual opportunity to view three-fourths of the globe's seas, NASA said.

"The objective of flying an oceanographer with such experience is expected to result in more effective use of the shuttle for ocean-related missions," the agency said in announcing Scully-Power's addition to the crew.

Scully-Power was born in Sydney and was educated in Australia and London.

43-year-old man convicted of passing counterfeit bills

United Press International
 CHARLOTTE, N.C. — A man wanted in six states for various sex crimes and murder was convicted Wednesday of passing counterfeit money in North Carolina, and prosecutors say evidence of criminal sex acts will be introduced at his sentencing.

In court documents unsealed after James M. Debardeleben's conviction, the government alleges Debardeleben is a dangerous special offender and is subject to the enhanced sentence provisions of that statute. The evidence to be presented at Debardeleben's sentencing is to

support prosecutors' contentions, the documents say.

A five-man, seven-woman jury deliberated only 50 minutes before returning the guilty verdict to end a 2 1/2-day trial in which U.S. secret Service agents and Gastonia shopping mall employees testified Debardeleben passed four bogus \$20 bills there April 28, 1983.

"I'm delighted with the conviction we got," assistant U.S. attorney Ken P. Andresen said. "I think we had a strong case and it was presented fairly. I was not concerned during the course of deliberations."

Debardeleben, 43, presented no

evidence in his own behalf. He showed no emotion as the verdict was read, but glared at the jury as each member was polled.

Defense attorney Keith Stroud said the decision not to present evidence was "just a matter of trial strategy."

Sentencing was delayed until July 6 at 10 a.m.

A court document described some of the items the government planned to present at the sentencing.

The document was a notice filed June 5 by Andresen. In it the government said it intended to show at

the sentencing that Debardeleben manufactured counterfeit money that was of a "high deceptive quality," and had passed \$160,000 worth of bogus bills.

The notice also said two firearms were found in Debardeleben's possession when he was arrested in Maryville, Tenn., May 25, 1983, and storage lockers he had in Manassas and Alexandria, Va., contained "equipment, material and paraphernalia used in the manufacturing of counterfeit currency, which included negatives, plates, and a printing press."

"The United States Secret Service

also seized pornographic material from defendant's storage lockers, including photographs of victims whom the defendant had brutally sodomized," the document read. "In addition, the Secret Service seized notes written by the defendant which described in detail the acts of sodomy and sexual torture. The agents also seized tape recordings made by the defendant of the actual acts of sodomy and sexual abuse...."

Debardeleben already has been sentenced to 35 years in prison for counterfeiting in Tennessee. He is wanted in Louisiana for the hanging murder of a real estate saleswoman

and in courts from Connecticut to Missouri on charges ranging from kidnapping to sodomy.

During closing arguments Wednesday, Stroud called the case one of "mis-identification" because of inconsistencies in testimony from a store clerk and security officers who identified Debardeleben as the man at the Gastonia store.

Last week in Bossier City, La., Debardeleben was charged with first-degree murder in the April 1982 slaying of real estate agent Jean McPhaul.

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