

Ninth fatal stabbing at TDC

United Press International
HUNTSVILLE — The Texas Department of Corrections Wednesday recorded its ninth fatal stabbing of the year, giving impetus to a reform group's contention that a "blood-bath" is approaching in Texas prisons.

Spokesman Phil Guthrie said the inmate, Richard J. Hord, 29, was stabbed several times, including once in the heart, about 2 a.m. at the Ramsey I Unit near Rosharon.

A special search team Wednesday was combing the Darrington Unit near Rosharon for weapons. It was the second search for the group, which found 524 homemade knives and clubs in the Ferguson Unit over the weekend. A similar search by guards of the Coffield Unit near Palestine last month yielded 489 weapons.

The increasing reports of attacks in prisons this summer has generated alarm in a group called the Prisoners Defense Committee, made up mostly of ex-convicts who say they regularly correspond with TDC inmates.

The group recommended a citizen watchdog group be given authority to examine every aspect of prison operations.

Guthrie said TDC administrators do not believe an uprising is probable.

Guthrie said, in response to the group's recommendation for a watchdog group, said TDC already is monitored by the Texas Board of Corrections, composed of citizens appointed by the governor, and a special master, appointed by a federal judge.

"Given that, we feel there is ample outside monitoring. Beyond that, we would resist the establishment of some additional group," Guthrie said.

Last week, Gov. Mark White said he would replace some top prison officials if the violence in the prisons is not brought under control.

TDC Director Ray Procunier, on the job since June 1, said there will always be incidences of violence in prisons. "These men are criminals," he said.

But he has also expressed alarm at the great numbers of weapons being found in the prisons and said additional staffing will be necessary to control the flow of weapons.

Currently, 5,300 guards oversee 36,000 prisoners in 26 units statewide, Guthrie said the TDC must have 6,100 guards in place by Jan. 1 to comply with a court order.

Procunier said before a federal court order ruled the method unconstitutional, prison officials used inmate trustees, or "tenders," to help guard prisoners.

The method was effective, "because peer pressure works best," he said. "We can't do that now, though, and those men have to be replaced with guards."

Mine search in Red Sea intensifies

United Press International
CAIRO, Egypt — Authorities searched ships in transit to the Red Sea Wednesday in an intensifying dragnet for mines only a day before thousands of Mecca-bound Moslem pilgrims were due to sail through waters where 14 ships have hit mines.

Four U.S. minesweeping helicopters arrived in Rota, Spain on the first leg of a journey to join Egyptian ships and aircraft searching for mines that have disrupted shipping in the Gulf of Suez as did a Libyan ship since the first of 14 ships hit a mine July 27.

"The foreign affairs ministry of the Islamic Republic strongly condemned a new conspiracy by the U.S. and the Zionist regime in the Suez Canal and the Red Sea to damage the reputation of the Islamic Revolution and Republic," the official Iranian news agency IRNA said.

The Iranian foreign ministry called for an international conference to "expose the agents behind those moves."

Iran Tuesday praised the minings as part of the "bitter struggle" against the West but denied any involvement with the Islamic Jihad — the same terrorist group that claimed responsibility for the twin suicide bombings that killed 241 U.S. servicemen and 58 French paratroopers in Beirut last year.

Fourteen ships have hit mines in the Gulf of Suez and the Red Sea since July 27, prompting Egypt to sweep its territorial waters for more explosive devices and request assistance from the United States and Britain.

The four Sikorsky RH-53D Sea Stallion helicopters dispatched to Rota were to be boarded onto the USS Shreveport, which was expected to depart for the Gulf of Suez Friday at the earliest.

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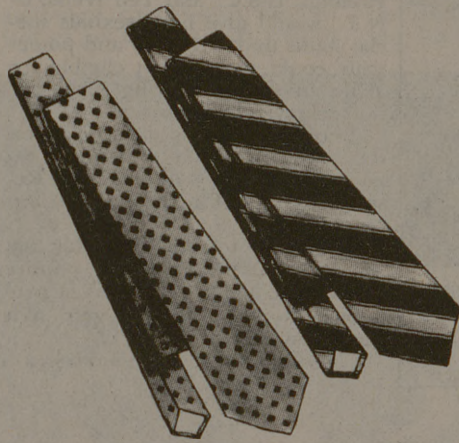
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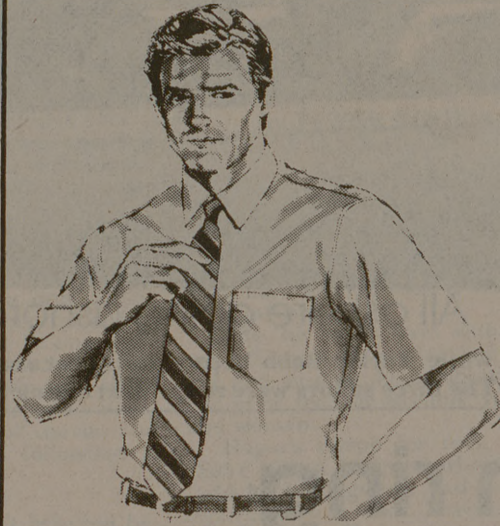
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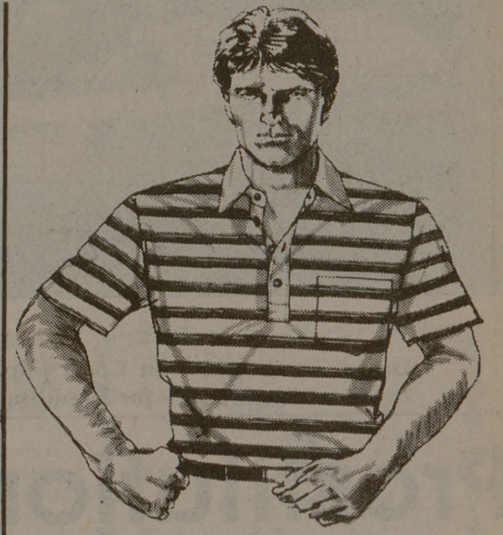
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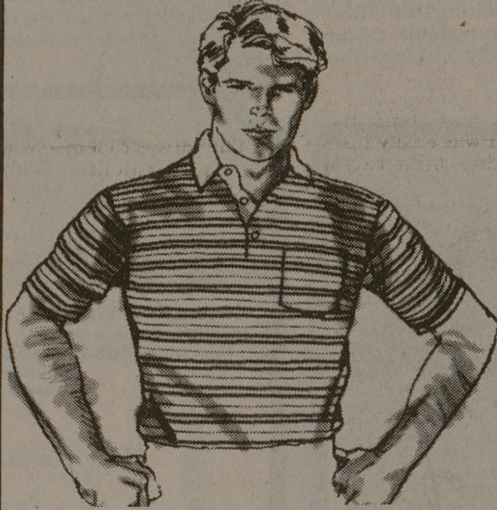
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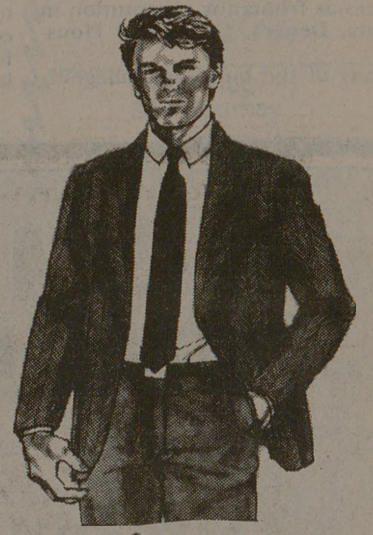
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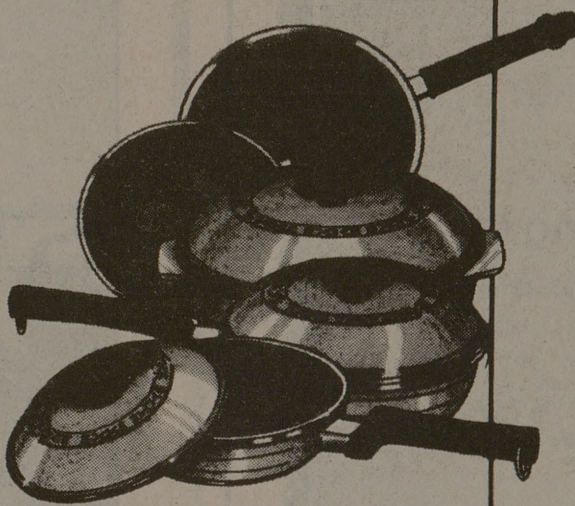
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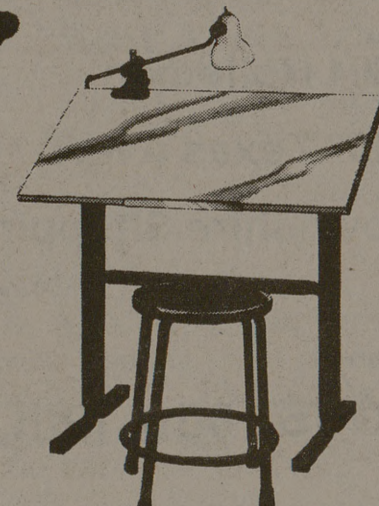
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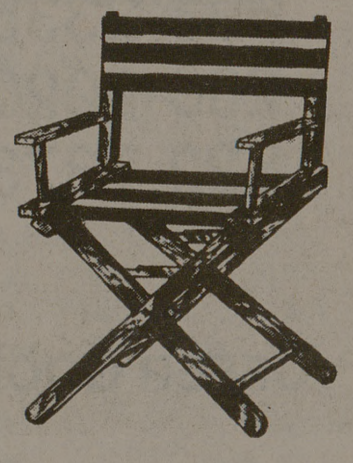
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