

# The Texas A&M Battalion

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## Iranian vessel laying mines was under U.S. surveillance

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. military forces had shadowed the Iranian ship they attacked Monday night for days, waiting for conclusive evidence that the vessel was laying underwater mines, Pentagon officials said Tuesday.

The officials, who requested anonymity, said the vessel Iran Ajr had been tracked by radar and by air for several days as it steamed through the central gulf toward Bahrain "because it had been seen loading suspect devices" before leaving an Iranian port.

"It was no accident" that U.S. helicopters from the frigate USS Jarrett were flying near the Iranian ship Monday night, using infrared sensors to monitor its activities, one official added.

"When we caught them in the act, we had the evidence we needed and we moved in," he said.

The Pentagon said three Iranians were killed and two were listed as missing in the attack, while 26 Iranians were rescued, four of them wounded. It said a Navy boarding party found 10 mines aboard the Iran Ajr, a 1,662-ton amphibious landing craft.

President Reagan, meantime, defended the U.S. attack on the ship as clearly "authorized by law" because the vessel was sowing mines in international waters.

Reagan also insisted, however, the United States had not entered a shooting war with Iran, and White House and Pentagon spokesmen said the crewmen of the Iranian vessel would be returned to Iran.

At the same time, Iranian leaders dismissed the U.S. account of the incident and vowed revenge.

Iranian President Ali Khamenei, appearing at the United Nations, described the American account as a "pack of lies" and declared: "The U.S. shall receive a proper response for this abominable act."

### Iranian president vows to seek 'total revenge' on U.S. military forces

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Iranian President Ali Khamenei fumed at the U.S. "arch-Satan" before the United Nations Tuesday and swore Iran would avenge a U.S. attack on an Iranian ship in the Persian Gulf.

The U.S. delegation stalked out in protest after the black-robed and turbaned Khamenei indicted the "bullying" United States and announced:

"This is a beginning for a series of events, the bitter consequences of which shall not be restricted to the Persian Gulf."

"I declare here, very unambiguously, that the United States shall receive a proper response for this abominable act."

Hundreds of angry, dissident Iranians demonstrated against the fundamentalist Tehran government outside the United Nations building, shouting "Expel Khamenei from the U.N.! Down with the criminal, murdering regime!"

Deputy U.S. Ambassador Herbert Okun told reporters, "I do not intend to sit by passively when our

country is insulted, our president pilloried and the truth trampled."

Khamenei did not answer President Reagan's call in a U.N. speech Monday that he clearly state whether Iran accepts a U.N. Security Council demand for a cease-fire in its 7-year-old war with Iraq. Reagan said that if Iran does not comply, the council must enforce its resolution — referring to an arms embargo.

Khamenei, who is staying at a hotel near the U.N., has launched a vigorous propaganda campaign with foreign diplomats and with U.S. television and media interviews and meetings with influential editors. He is the highest ranking Iranian official to visit the United States since the 1979 revolution.

He demanded in his speech Tuesday that Iraq be punished as the aggressor and said the Security Council had no moral authority because of the veto power of the United States and four other permanent council members.

Pentagon sources reported U.S. military bases around the globe had been reminded to maintain an alert for terrorist activity, and tensions in the gulf itself remained high.

An unidentified Iranian hovercraft closed within one mile or so of an American frigate that was towing the crippled Iran Ajr on Tuesday afternoon, the Defense Department

stops in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt and visits to U.S. warships.

A U.S. military helicopter, believed to be an Army MH-6 Special Operations aircraft, attacked the vessel while a second helicopter flew nearby, sources said. Chief Pentagon spokesman Fred Hoffman said the American aircraft used 7.62mm machine guns and 2.75-inch rockets to attack the boat and caused extensive damage.

Hoffman said U.S. personnel boarded the Iran Ajr at 9:40 p.m. CST Monday, about 6½ hours after it was attacked and briefly set ablaze. Although Hoffman wouldn't comment, sources said the boarding party consisted of Navy SEAL commandos.

Hoffman said the mines found aboard the craft were "old-style contact mines," the same type that have previously been discovered in the gulf and attributed to Iran.

Six other mines were believed to have been sown by the Iran Ajr before it was attacked and Navy helicopters were searching for them, he said.

Hoffman said the ship would be towed to an anchorage in international waters off the coast of Bahrain. No decision has been made on the vessel's disposition, he said.

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said the United States now had plenty of evidence to lay before the United Nations to document the Iranian mine-laying activity.

"Our main purpose at this point is to document the laying of the mines . . ." he said. "We certainly have the evidence."

On Capitol Hill, House Armed Services Committee Chairman Les Aspin, D-Wis., said the U.S. action was "a necessary response to a veritable act of war by Iran."

He said it was important for members of the United Nations "to recognize that Iran is thumbing its nose at the world community."



Photo by Sarah Cowan

### Flashing that Aggie spirit

Jeff Bennett, a sophomore biochemistry major from El Paso, humps in a special way during Tuesday's volleyball game against the University of Texas at Arlington.

## Costa Rican leader encourages United States to take peace risk

WASHINGTON (AP) — Costa Rican President Oscar Arias appealed to President Reagan and Congress on Tuesday to "take a risk for peace" and permit the peace plan he has drafted for Central America to run its course.

"The essence of my words is that we give peace a chance — that is the message I have brought to Washington," Arias told reporters.

Arias met with Reagan at the White House and addressed members of Congress gathered informally in the House of Representatives.

Arias, the principal architect of the five-nation Central American peace plan unveiled in Guatemala last month, told Congress his initiative needs time and assistance in order to succeed.

The plan calls for a negotiated cease-fire to go into effect by Nov. 7. But Arias said the peace effort would not be scuttled if that date passes without a definitive settlement.

"Some steps may be taken before our deadlines expire," Arias told Congress.

### Ortega announces truce to initiate possible cease-fire

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (AP) — President Daniel Ortega said Tuesday the government would start a partial truce and withdraw troops to designated areas to open the way to a total cease-fire with U.S.-supported Contra rebels.

"We are working on concrete actions to make known the first zones where the cease-fire will be declared," Ortega said. He said the locations of the designated areas would be announced.

A communique read by presidential spokesman Manuel Espinoza

Meanwhile, the Nicaraguan government announced a partial cease-fire with Contra rebels to start unilaterally.

It also said an opposition radio station could reopen immediately. President Daniel Ortega did not

said that to achieve "an effective cease-fire" Ortega had decided to postpone offensive military operations in part of the country and concentrate troops in designated areas.

The announcements were the latest in a series of actions to comply with a Central American peace plan Ortega and the presidents of El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica and Guatemala signed on Aug. 7.

On Sunday, the government announced that the opposition newspaper *La Prensa* would be allowed to resume publication after a shutdown of more than a year.

specify a timetable for his leftist government's truce plan but said:

"We are working on concrete actions to make known the first zones where the cease-fire will be declared."

He said troops would be withdrawn to designated areas in a partial truce as a step toward a total cease-fire with the U.S.-supported rebels.

Arias' 20-minute meeting with Reagan was private, but a senior U.S. official who was present said the Costa Rican leader agreed that the Contra insurgents should have a role in cease-fire negotiations with Nicaragua's Sandinista-ruled government.

The official, who spoke on condition he not be identified, quoted Arias as saying that he would support a request through the Organization of American States for "drastic sanctions" against Nicaragua "if the world could be shown that the Sandinistas had refused to comply" with the peace agreement they accepted in Guatemala City last month.

Shortly after Arias spoke, the House Rules Committee cleared the way for floor action as early as Wednesday on the request by House Minority Leader Bob Michel, R-Ill., for money for food, medicine, boots and other aid for the Contras.

## Witnesses at hearing offer conflicting views about Bork's opinions

WASHINGTON (AP) — Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork was described by a noted legal scholar Tuesday as a man whose views "could spell chaos" for the nation, but other witnesses at his confirmation hearings defended him and said his views have been distorted by critics.

The Senate Judiciary Committee heard the opposition to Bork from Harvard University Law School Professor Laurence Tribe.

And a panel of witnesses including novelist William Styron and artist Robert Rauschenberg suggested confirming Bork to the Supreme Court would be a threat to freedom of expression.

However, Carla Hills, who was secretary of housing and urban development in the Ford administration, testified she had been "startled and saddened" by what she said had been distortions of Bork's views during the hearings so far.

And Lloyd Cutler, who was White House counsel in the Carter administration, submitted testimony call-

ing Bork "a conservative jurist who is closer to the center than to the extreme right."

Meanwhile, Supreme Court Justice Byron R. White was quoted as saying "it would be all right with me" if Bork won confirmation.

Noting that the length of questioning may be unprecedented, committee chairman Joseph R. Biden Jr., D-Del., said, "It's clear this nomination is hanging in the balance." Bork testified for a record five days last week and the hearings lasted until 11 p.m. Monday.

Cutler, who has been criticized by some fellow liberals for supporting Bork, said in a prepared statement that Bork's record "cannot be squared with the extravagant characterizations of Judge Bork as a throwback" to the days when slavery was legal.

And Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, a leading defender of Bork, told Tribe, "I find his viewpoints to be different than the way you characterize them."

## A&M firefighters return from California after helping battle spread of blazes

By Tracy Hinton  
Reporter

Firefighters from the Texas Forest Service returned Thursday from a two-week assignment in California where they helped fight forest fires that raged in five western states since August.

The firefighting teams were sent to help put out fires started by 4,000 lightning strikes on Aug. 1. Bruce Miles, director of the Texas Forest Service located on the A&M campus, said.

The fires are under control for the most part," Miles said. "Two are still being worked on. There is an anticipated dry front coming into California that may cause problems."

Teams from Texas, requested by the United States Forest Service in Atlanta, were sent to the Plumas National Forest, the Mendocino National Forest and the Stanislaus National Forest.

Miles said the firefighters who were sent had extra training in this field of work. They were flown on a chartered plane from Jackson, Miss. to California.

Bobby Young, a forester from Lufkin, said, "There (California) the fires are a lot harder to control because of the steep terrain. They were not contained when we arrived."

Young was a strike team leader assigned to the Mendenhall fire in the Mendocino National Forest 200 miles north of San Francisco. He was in charge of 16 men and three

pumper trucks that belong to the Texas Forest Service.

The water expansion pumping system used — known as "The Texas Snow Job" because it was invented in Texas — uses the water to produce a foam mixture.

"We were one of the last units to be released because of our water-foam capabilities," Young said.

Brad Smith, a Rusk County forester, was in charge of a 20-man hand-tool crew. They used shovels and rakes to help contain the fire. Smith and his team were assigned to the Clark fire in northeast California in the Plumas National Forest.

"There was an estimated loss of \$71 million in timber," Young said. "There were 52 injuries, but no re-

ported deaths. The fires were very hot. It was so smoky you couldn't even see the top of the mountains. Despite the shortage of personnel, we (the TFS) did a good job and received a lot of compliments. We spent as many as 23 hours on the fire line at a time. It was quite an experience."

Because of the altitudes, the fires were accessible only by foot. Smith said it was impossible to get trucks close to the fires in the mountainous terrain.

"We usually spent 14 or 15 hours a day working on the blaze," Smith said. "We had to fight fires a lot different out there, like using hand tools. You don't see fires like that in East Texas."

## Navy fighter shoots down Air Force jet in exercises

NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — A U.S. Air Force reconnaissance jet plane was accidentally shot down Tuesday by a Navy F-14 fighter.

The jet was downed over the Mediterranean Sea during NATO exercises.

The two Air Force crewmen ejected safely before the plane crashed into the sea, Navy officials said.

The Air Force RF-4C reconnaissance jet was downed by an air-to-air missile that was fired by the Navy fighter plane, said Cmdr. Jolene Keefer, a spokesman for the Naval Air Force Atlantic.

The Air Force plane was from Tactical Reconnaissance Wing 26 at Wiesbaden Air Base in West Germany.

The Navy F-14, from the car-

rier USS Saratoga, carries the long-range Phoenix missile, the medium-range Sparrow missile and the short-range Sidewinder missile.

Keefer said she did not know which kind of missile hit the Air Force jet.

A helicopter that was launched from the Saratoga picked up the two Air Force officers within 30 minutes after the accident.

The officers were taken to the Saratoga, Keefer said. She said both of the Air Force officers in command of the reconnaissance plane escaped unharmed from the accident.

"Neither of the men suffered any apparent injuries and both are in good health," Keefer said.