

# Iraq resumes blitz of Iranian targets, damages tanker

MANAMA, Bahrain (AP) — Iraq resumed its aerial blitz of Iranian oil targets Sunday, severely damaging a Liberian-flagged supertanker. Two crewmen were reported killed and four others missing in the attack.

An Iranian surface-to-surface missile exploded in Baghdad, the Iraqi capital, as Iran retaliated for the attack on tankers.

Two Exocet missiles from Iraqi jets crashed into the engine room of the 239,435-ton Rova, setting the ship ablaze, according to gulf-based shipping sources.

It was one of three raids announced by Iraq against tankers along the Iranian coast since Saturday morning.

Shipping sources identified one of the three targets as the Merlin, a 215,925-ton Cypriot-flag tanker under charter to Iran. An Exocet missile crashed into the ship but did not explode and damage was minor, they said. The unexploded missile was still aboard.

The identity of the third ship was not known, the sources said.

Both Baghdad and Tehran reported that a long-range Iranian missile was fired into the Iraqi capital overnight but disagreed where it hit. Iran claimed the missile struck a major military garrison, while Iraq said it landed in a residential area, killing "numerous" civilians. No figures were given.

The attack on Baghdad was the first since two of the projectiles, believed to be Soviet-designed Sea Bs, hit the city of 4 million last Monday.

In other developments, a convoy of four U.S. reflagged Kuwaiti tankers was moving north up the Persian Gulf under U.S. Navy escort, the 11th since America began the operations in mid-July.

A U.S. spokesman said the convoy had passed the Strait of Hormuz, the gulf's southern tip without incident, and other sources reported it was off the United Arab Emirates coast at midday.

The convoy included the oil tankers Sea Isle City and Ocean Guard, 81,283 and 79,999 tons respectively, and the gas carriers Gas King and Gas Princess, both 46,723 tons.

They were escorted by four U.S. missile frigates and the 8,600-ton amphibious landing dock the Mount Vernon, entering the gulf for the first time.

Another U.S. Navy ship, similar to the Mount Vernon, was sailing with the convoy. Although witnesses could not immediately identify it, a spokesman for the U.S. forces said it may have been the Raleigh, another landing ship.

The Raleigh's hospital unit was caring for four Iranians wounded in Thursday's clash between U.S. helicopter gunships and three Iranian Revolutionary Guard gunboats in the northern gulf.

## Human fire detectors at nuclear power plant cause experts concern

PLYMOUTH, Mass. (AP) — Donna Vohnoutka passes her hours at the Pilgrim nuclear power plant fighting the boredom that comes with the job of staring into space to see if a fire will erupt.

Vohnoutka, 30, is among dozens of people at Pilgrim who have been needed to do what machines take care of in other plants. For 20 hours a week she watches for sparks or smoke because technical problems and flaws in the fire protection system require human stand-ins.

"Basically, we play human smoke detectors," Vohnoutka said. "We make sure everything's OK. We rove or sit in a room for an hour. . . It's pretty simple. It's pretty basic. It's pretty boring."

Fire watchers must be on full alert to earn their \$6-an-hour wage. Distractions like eating, reading or listening to the radio are prohibited while watching for something to happen, workers say.

"I sing to myself," Vohnoutka said in a recent interview.

Fire watchers are used occasionally at other nuclear power plants, experts say. But more have been employed at Pilgrim than most other plants since 1985, when prob-

lems with malfunctioning equipment and poor management began. Troubles shut down the 15-year-old plant in April 1986.

Robert Pollard, a former Nuclear Regulatory Commission official who developed fire protection guidelines for nuclear plants after the 1975 accident at the Brown's Ferry reactor in Alabama, said Boston Edison apparently have the wrong attitude to use fire watchers.

"This is a temporary measure intended to be taken infrequently," said Pollard, now with the Union Concerned Scientists in Washington. "My experience is, they're using watchers at Pilgrim with apparently little effort to correct the situation that required them in the first place."

Allen Blough of the NRC, who is overseeing the inspection of improvements at Pilgrim, agreed that the number of fire watchers at Pilgrim is remarkable enough to cause concern.

John Fidler, spokesman for Boston Edison Co., the plant's owner, said the only fire ever to occur at Pilgrim was in a shack outside the plant and it was quickly put out.

## DOE studies salt tunnels as nuclear waste dumps

CARLSBAD, N.M. (AP) — In a year, if everything goes as planned, the first truckload of nuclear garbage will arrive for burial at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near here.

Workers spent the past 18 months readying the \$2.1 billion facility for radioactive waste generated by defense projects.

By the time workers store the first barrels and canisters containing contaminated lab coats, test tubes, machine tools and other articles in the salt tunnels, officials hope to be sure the waste will pose no danger for 10,000 years.

They say they're almost certain already. WIPP managers say the salt formation in which the waste will be buried is 225 million years old. They figure that if the formation has lasted that long, it'll last another 10,000 years.

The U.S. Department of Energy has stressed that WIPP is primarily a laboratory and secondarily a waste disposal site.

"When you try to tell people what's going to happen 10,000 years hence, it's hard to earn their confidence unless we've tested adequately," said Robert Neill, a supervisor with the state's Environmental Evaluation Group, an independent state agency funded by the DOE to monitor the repository's development.

Sandia National Laboratories, in an attempt to predict what will happen in the repository during the next 10,000 years, has been performing experiments to determine exactly how the salt tunnels react to pressures so far underground combined with the heat emitted by radioactive waste.

Wendell Weart, senior project manager for Sandia, said salt is as malleable like Silly Putty.

"The walls, ceilings and floors gradually moving together, as you can't perceive it," Weart said.

DOE project supervisor Jack Man said, "In less than 100 years predict the floors, ceilings and walls will come together and compress and encapsulate the drums."

## Fire chief cites power of powder

FORT WAYNE, Ind. (AP) — The fire chief in this city says powder to water for putting out fires.

Chief Ronald Brown, who has been a firefighter for 16 years and head of the local department for three years, says not only powder cheaper than water, but also has "five times the extinguishing power of water and far less damage than water."

The department responded to about 245 fires each year, and a 40-year-old fire chief says "antees" that in his city 99 percent of the fires can be dealt with powder.

The chief admits that powder won't put out all fires, but it will water. Powder is effective mainly against fires in buildings no higher than two stories and must be applied directly to flames, he says.

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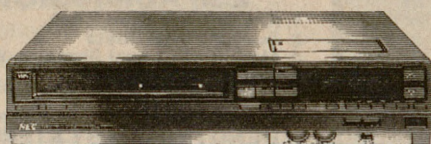
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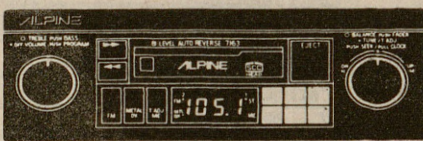
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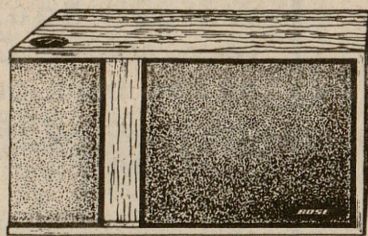
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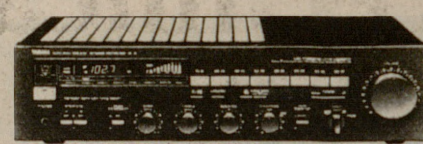
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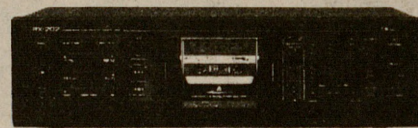
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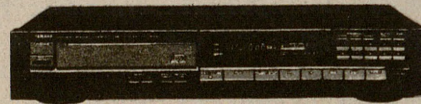
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