

Tuesday, February 5, 1991

The Battalion

Explosives threaten navy base

NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — Six pipe bombs found fastened Monday to two chemical tanks near the world's largest naval base were safely disarmed or detonated, military officials said.

A one-square-mile area was evacuated after the first two bombs, attached to a tank containing highly flammable methanol, were discovered. The other four bombs were attached to a tank containing a less dangerous chemical.

The tanks are at Allied Terminals Inc. on the Elizabeth River. The site is about 10 miles from the sprawling Norfolk Naval Base, which has sent about 35,000 sailors to the Persian Gulf, and five miles from the Navy's Craney Island fuel depot.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the bombs. Base security had been tightened in the wake of Iraqi threats to commit terrorism because of the war in the Mideast.

Each of two sets of bombs consisted of pipes filled with explosives and had a detonator. Authorities re-

Officials neutralize bombs wired to chemical tanks

used to say what type of explosive was used.

An Allied Terminals employee found the first two bombs attached to a one-million-gallon tank of methanol, a highly volatile and flammable chemical used as a fuel, solvent and antifreeze.

Those bombs were successfully disarmed and removed, said Bob Jasinowski, a state police special agent.

Four pipe bombs were found later on an adjacent three-million-gallon tank that was about one-third full with sodium sulfide, a not-very-flammable chemical used in the manufacture of fertilizer.

Those bombs were removed and taken to a "safe place" where they were detonated, said police spokesman Bob Haynes. He said authorities did not find any more bombs

when they searched the site, which contains about 15 tanks.

Cathy Bulman, a city spokeswoman, had said the first two bombs found "look pretty sophisticated."

Lt. Cmdr. Mike Todd, a Navy spokesman, declined to say if the discovery of the bombs had resulted in heightened security at the base.

"But I can assure you that appropriate security is in place commensurate with the perceived threat," he said. "We're constantly reviewing our security procedures and making updates and changes as required."

Tom Love, spokesman for the FBI in Norfolk, said the federal agency had not determined if the bombs were the work of terrorists.

"It's much too early to say something like that," Love said.

The FBI has taken the lead role in the investigation because of the pos-

sibility terrorism was involved, FBI spokesman Bill Carter said.

The first two bombs were attached to valves at the tank's base and the timer was not operating, Fire Chief Tom Gardner said.

After news about the pipe bombs spread, a bomb threat was telephoned to authorities about a device at the nearby Miller Oil Co. No bomb was found "after a pretty thorough search," Haynes said.

He said authorities were not aware of any telephoned bomb threats before the first bombs were found.

Police cars rode through a residential neighborhood near the storage site asking residents to leave their homes. Most driveways were empty, but a few curious residents came out to see what was going on.

The first two bombs were discovered about 7:45 a.m. by an Allied Terminals employee who notified police; the other bombs were discovered some time later.

In all, there are about 15 tanks at the storage site.

1992 budget foreshadows higher deficit

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush sent Congress a \$1.45 trillion budget on Monday that projects a record deficit at a time of recession while paying for the Persian Gulf War only through March.

The president conceded tough economic times. "The longest period of economic expansion in history has been temporarily interrupted," Bush wrote in a budget introduction. "We can, we hope, return to growth soon."

He said he will send Congress a supplemental request to cover Operation Desert Storm in the coming weeks.

Democratic congressional leaders called the fiscal 1992 budget inadequate, saying it only envisions "a short war and proposes no programs to counter the recession. They basically repeat a list of the same things that go back to Reagan."

He said House Budget Committee Chairman Leon Panetta, D-Calif. In brief, Bush proposed:

• A spending increase of 2.6 percent over the current year, which will not keep pace with inflation expected to reach 4.3 percent this year.

• A deficit of \$280.9 billion, at the same time he admitted this year's red ink will hit a record \$318.1 billion.

• Selected domestic program cuts, some rejected in past years, worth \$46.6 billion over five years.

As Bush presented his 2,029-page document, his top economic aides suggested that the recession probably began last August or September.

"The economy is in a recession," Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady said. "We expect it will be of short duration. We want it to get back on a growth path."

Spill taints water supply

JUBAIL, Saudi Arabia (AP) — This desert kingdom will have to ration drinking water if a syrupy sea of oil spoils the blue lagoon that feeds the world's largest desalination plant, an engineer said Monday.

Saudi Arabia gets two-thirds of its water from its desalination plants, half of it from the one at this coastal city on the Persian Gulf.

If the world's largest oil slick manages to taint the Jubail plant, it would have to be shut down and a water shortage would quickly follow, said Mohammed Sulaiman, the engineer in charge of defending the plant.

"We would not have normal production," he said. "We would have to ration water."

"Perhaps a horror movie should be made of this thing, a big, black, floating thing," said Abdallah bin Faisal al-Saud, prince of Jubail and a member of the Saudi ruling family.

Workers are deploying an array of booms, skimmers, deflectors and filters at the mouth of the placid Persian Gulf lagoon to try to prevent the oil spill from hitting Jubail's desalination plant.

The slick had been lying idle about 80 miles north of this coastal city, but heavy winds Monday were expected to speed its progress south. The spill is now expected to reach Jubail this week.

Al-Saud said the gulf should be declared "an international disaster area" and appealed for worldwide aid to help contain the spill, estimated at 460 million gallons.

"I'm not sure there is such a designation, but there should be," he told reporters.

The desalination plant in Jubail supplies most of the water to Saudi Arabia's eastern province, including 80 percent of the drinking water for Riyadh, the capital. The plant produces 230 million gallons of drinking water a day by removing salt from the briny gulf water.

As combat jets flew overhead toward Iraq and occupied Kuwait, Saudi officials took reporters on a tour of the heavily guarded plant. Photographers were forbidden from taking pictures of the gargantuan sprawl of entwined pipes and gaping intake ports.

The machinery stretches two miles down the coast, sucking water from a lagoon created by a semi-circle of stone breakwalls that branch out into the gulf. It is this lagoon that must be protected against the oil — something Saudi officials have consistently said they are confident they will be able to do.

"It will be easy to contain, easy to deal with," said Hamid Sutaiby, operations manager for the 10-year-old Jubail plant.

But environmental experts and Western officials are not nearly as optimistic. They say the oil, now a gell-like substance that could be two feet thick when it reaches Jubail, could splash over booms or flow under them, depending on wind and currents.

"A conservative estimate is we're going to be able to protect the system," said U.S. Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Paul Milligan. "To make a blanket statement that we're not going to get oil, I would never say that."

FBI agent gets 20-year jail term

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The only FBI agent ever convicted of espionage was sentenced to 20 years in prison Monday by a judge who suggested the agency shouldn't have placed such an inept agent in control of sensitive documents.

It should have been obvious that Richard Miller was highly susceptible to recruitment as a spy, U.S. District Judge Robert Takasugi said.

"The fact is that Miller betrayed a national trust," the judge said. "And yet I truly wonder why the FBI allowed Miller to serve in this capacity."

"Mr. Miller was out of control. He was totally out of control," Takasugi imposed separate sentences ranging from 10 years to 20 years on the six counts of Miller's indictment, but he ordered all of the sentences to run concurrently. He said Miller would be eligible for pa-

role after serving one-third of the 20 years.

The sentence was far lighter than Takasugi could have chosen. A judge in an earlier trial on the same charges sentenced Miller to two consecutive life terms plus 50 years. The conviction was overturned on appeal.

Prosecutors successfully argued that Miller, 54, traded sex for secrets in a romance with Svetlana Ogorodnikov, a Soviet emigre whose ties to that country's government were shadowy.

Takasugi imposed the sentence after Miller stepped to a lectern in the packed courtroom and gave an emotional apology for his actions. He said he knew he had hurt his family, his co-workers and his church.

"Most of all, I've offended my

heavenly Father," Miller said. "You can offend a lot of people but you can't offend God."

Miller's lawyers insisted that he never set out to become a spy.

The prosecutors, who had sought the harshest sentence possible, seemed to agree that Miller drifted into spying.

"We never contended he set out to betray his country," Assistant U.S. Attorney Adam Schiff said. "What we contended is that he set out to sleep with Svetlana Ogorodnikov, which he did on the first or second meeting. ... Very quickly, his motivation became a self-centered one of greed and lust."

Miller, who showed no reaction when the sentence was read, was immediately led away in handcuffs to prison.

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