

News Digest

By The Associated Press

Car bomb explodes at U.S. military center in W. Germany

FRANKFURT, West Germany — A powerful car bomb exploded outside a busy U.S. military shopping center Sunday, injuring 34 people, most of them Americans, authorities said.

The blast damaged 42 cars in the center's parking lot, shattered windows and blew a gaping hole in the back wall of one shop.

"We suspect leftist terrorists because the attack was similar to the car bombing at the U.S. Air Force Base in August," said spokesman Alexander Prechtel of the Federal Prosecutor's Office in Karlsruhe.

That Aug. 8 car-bomb attack at the U.S. Air Force Rhein-Main Air Base killed two Americans and injured 20 people.

The terrorist Red Army Faction asserted responsibility for the August attack but there was no immediate claim of responsibility for Sunday's bombing.

"Like in August, Americans were the target of the attack," Prechtel said.

Frankfurt police spokesman Kurt

Kraus said the bomb was packed in a blue BMW sedan that was bought by a "Moroccan-looking man" Saturday at a second-hand car dealership near Frankfurt.

He said police were looking for witnesses who may have seen the car or the man since Saturday.

Kraus said the BMW was bought at the same dealership that sold the car used in the August bombing.

Bill Swisher, a spokesman for the U.S. Army's 97th General Hospital in Frankfurt, said 34 injured people were treated at the hospital. He said 27 had been released by late evening.

"Seven people are still here and they are listed in fair to good condition," Swisher said.

He said a 3-year-old American child was among those released but could give no further details.

The injured included 19 military personnel, 11 American civilians, a West German civilian and a Filipino,

Swisher said.

A witness, not identified, described the scene to the American Forces Network:

"All of a sudden there was a real loud crash. I turned around to look and see where it came from. Automatically I put my hands over my head. I looked and there was a big yellow flash from between the two buildings."

Chalko said those entering the shopping center must pass by a military police checkpoint five yards from the blast site.

"A guard who was on duty at the time was one of the people injured in the blast," he said.

West German police and U.S. soldiers in full battle gear immediately shut down the shopping center, located in a residential area in northern Frankfurt, and sealed off the area.

The Red Army Faction has attacked West German, U.S. and NATO institutions for more than 15 years, claiming responsibility for dozens of bombings, kidnappings and assassinations.

Commandos storm hijacked jetliner

VALLETTA, Malta — Egyptian commandos stormed a hijacked Egyptian jetliner Sunday night, and an explosion and gunfire during the assault killed as many as 50 people aboard the Boeing 737, a government spokesman said.

"There are about 50 dead by bullet or fire," spokesman Paul Mifsud told reporters two hours after the assault.

He said the hijackers hurled hand grenades at the passengers when they realized the plane was being stormed, and the resulting fire destroyed the inside of the jetliner.

The victims "were trapped inside and couldn't get out," he added.

There were different reports on the number of hijackers, ranging from two to four.

Malta's state-run television said

about 80 people were on the jetliner when the commandos attacked. It said 28 wounded people were taken to hospitals.

Mifsud said Prime Minister Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici authorized the assault because "the situation was getting out of hand." He added that it was totally an Egyptian operation.

Mifsud quoted the pilot, Capt. Hani Galal, as saying the hijack leader was "a madman" who sang and danced each time he shot a hostage and tossed the body from the plane onto the tarmac.

Galal earlier told authorities by radio that the hijackers had killed seven people.

As the commandos stormed the plane, Galal killed the hijack leader with an ax, Mifsud said. Both the pilot and the co-pilot were wounded in the struggle.

Farmer's refusal to leave farm 'tries patience' of FmHA officials

OMAHA — Farmers Home Administration officials said they had no choice but to file criminal trespassing charges against a Wymore farmer who has refused to stop farming land now owned by the FmHA.

"I don't think we've ever faced a situation like this before," said Morris Monesson, deputy director of the FmHA's emergency division in Washington, D.C. "We've had people who have been slow leaving their farms, but nothing like this."

LaVerne Meints and his son, David, lost about 400 acres of southeast Nebraska farmland in a foreclosure sale in April. The FmHA bought the Nebraska farmland with the intent of renting or reselling it to an area farmer.

But Meints and his son planted corn, grain sorghum and soybeans on 270

acres of the land and began harvesting crops recently. Meints said he had rented the land to his son on a five-year contract. As a result, the farmer said he doesn't recognize the FmHA's claim to his land.

After unsuccessful attempts to enter into a lease arrangement with Meints, Gage County FmHA officials obtained a ruling from Gage County Judge William Rist, who said the Meints family had no legal right to the land or crop.

Because Meints ignored the ruling and began harvesting the crop, criminal trespassing charges were filed against him, his son and four area farmers.

Nolan Kegley, an FmHA public relations specialist in Washington, said the Meints situation has tried his patience.

"Sure, they don't recognize the FmHA now, but they recognized us when they applied for a loan and took our money," he said. "They obviously have no right to be there."

Monesson said the FmHA tries to act reasonably when a family farm is being foreclosed upon.

"We want to work with borrowers, we want to give them every reasonable chance to work something out," he said.

But the FmHA's patience has its limits, Monesson said.

"I understand that it is difficult for some farmers to accept the fact they have to leave their land and that it takes time to adjust," he said. "But we can't just stand around and watch while borrowers thumb their noses at us."

Some Nebraska water not fit for drinking

Discoveries in recent years show that water from public wells in about 45 Nebraska communities has an unhealthy level of contaminants — usually nitrates — for both infants and adults, state officials say.

In some communities, new wells have been sunk. In others, bottled water is used for infants. In Grand Island, water is distributed in plastic jugs.

Through February, officials had identified 136 sites of known groundwater contamination, including leaks

from fuel storage tanks, industrial and city lagoons, a cheese factory lagoon, a petroleum refinery, an ammunition plant, a brine pit and a creosote post storage area.

Dennis Grams, director of the Nebraska Department of Environmental Control, said he doesn't know if the number of water wells carrying contaminated water has increased or if an increase in water testing resulted in the discovery of water that has been polluted for a long time.

Officials cannot calculate how many

private wells are contaminated because state officials don't check them unless the owner requests it. Some 250,000 to 300,000 Nebraskans drink from private wells, said Cliff Summers, a Nebraska Department of Health official.

The Environmental Protection Agency has placed or considered placing Hastings, Waverly, Lindsay, Capitol Heights at Grand Island and Cozad, on its Superfund groundwater cleanup list because of contaminants found in those cities' drinking water.

Kerrey's farm proposals need legislative review, farm leaders, bankers say

OMAHA — Gov. Bob Kerrey's agriculture proposals for 1986 deserve thorough investigation by the Legislature, though the proposals may collide with economic reality, farm leaders, legislators and bankers say.

"I applaud the governor for coming up with his concepts. I think we ought to pursue them," said Mel Adams of Ogallala, president of the Nebraska Bankers Association.

In a speech earlier this month to the Nebraska Independent Bankers Association, Kerrey outlined eight recommendations concerning Nebraska agriculture.

"It is a list of things I believe our state should prepare for the future and to give us some answers to current problems," he said.

The recommendations include creating a state agricultural authority, passing a farmstead act, diverting federal funds to the Nebraska Food Processing Institute and encouraging more biotechnology research.

State Sen. Vard Johnson of Omaha said legislators haven't given the proposals much attention because they have been preoccupied with taxation proposals and budget cuts during the recent special legislative session.

Don Nelson, the governor's chief of staff, said, "The fundamental premise of all the governor's proposals is that more farm and ranching units in Nebraska are better — unlike the thinking that seems to be coming from the federal government. The governor wants to help as many Nebraska farmers and ranchers as possible."

Roy Frederick, University of

Nebraska-Lincoln agricultural economist, said the governor's proposals eventually will come up against economic reality.

"I think the governor will find out that he is paddling upstream with his proposals," Frederick said. "That doesn't mean they can't work or don't deserve to be tried. It just means it will be difficult."

Although some mid-sized farms have been shown to be as efficient as larger farms in producing crops, the larger farms have economic advantages, Frederick said.

Bryce Neidig of Madison, president of the Nebraska Farm Bureau, said the governor and state legislators should recognize that not every Nebraska farmer and rancher can be saved.

"What I think we have to shoot for is using reasonable and prudent means to save as many as possible," he said. "I think some of the governor's proposals are excellent ideas."

The concept behind Kerrey's farmstead act, which would give Nebraska lenders options in working with farmers who have financial problems, was endorsed by Neidig and Jerry Hansen of the Center for Rural Affairs, a small-farm advocacy group at Washburn.

Kerrey's proposal for a state agricultural authority also received approval.

Kerrey has said he envisions the creation of a quasi-governmental lending authority that could buy land, enter into ventures with private industries, sell bonds and offer other financing efforts.

Lottery winner, friends party Hawaiian style

DES MOINES, Iowa — One of the nicest things about being a millionaire, says Bill Watson, is being able to buy a round of drinks — even when they're \$4 mai tais in Hawaii.

After winning Iowa's \$4 million lottery prize two weeks ago, Watson quit his firefighting job in Omaha and took his initial \$150,000 check and six friends to Las Vegas and Hawaii.

"Before, I couldn't afford to buy a round of drinks," he told the Des Moines Register. "But I can now, even though those little drinks are \$4 each here. I doesn't take long to drink those little mai tais."

Watson said he will remain, at least for a while, in the mobile home in Council Bluffs that he bought from his parents for \$10,000 seven years ago.

Will he work again?
"We'll see how bored I get," he said.



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