

THURSDAY



Classy collection
Classic Comics rate a vault

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Blueprint special
Guide to home improvement

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The Arizona Daily Star

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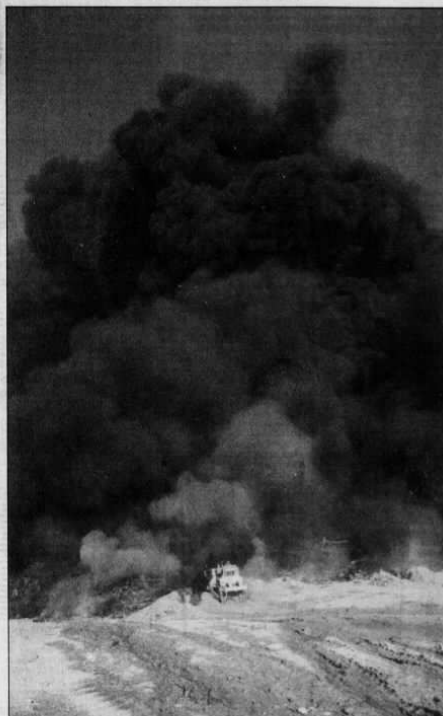
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Landfill inferno



Photos by David Sanders, The Arizona Daily Star

Smoke and flames, some leaping 200 feet into the air, dwarf a bulldozer fighting fire

Tire fire cloaks Tucson with thick smoke

By C.T. Revere
The Arizona Daily Star

Fire officials said the blaze that consumed 3 acres of tires in a Tucson landfill and spread a thick cloak of smoke over the city yesterday probably started by spontaneous combustion.

The fire began after midnight in a section of the Las Pintas Landfill, 5300 E. Los Rios Road, where discarded tires are kept. Flames covered the entire 3 acres of tires and, in the early morning, flames reached about 200 feet into the air.

See LANDFILL, Page 2A



A bulldozer pushes dirt in an effort to smother flames

At least 47 die on USS Iowa in gun turret blast

By D.W. Page
The Associated Press

NORFOLK, Va. — A huge gun turret packed with gunpowder exploded in flames on the battleship USS Iowa near Puerto Rico yesterday, killing at least 47 sailors in one of the worst naval disasters since the Vietnam War.

The death toll from the accident during a gunnery exercise "could go higher, but we don't know at this point," said Lt. Cmdr. Steve Burnett, a spokesman for the Atlantic Fleet, based in Norfolk. The death count was taken from a list of sailors assigned to the position rather than a body count.

No other sailors were seriously injured in the explosion and fire on the battleship. A number of sailors suffered minor injuries, mostly bumps and bruises, said Chief Petty Officer Bobby Gumbert, another fleet spokesman.

Each gun's 16-inch-diameter projectile is propelled by explosives in fabric bags loaded separately from the projectiles. The gun requires up to five bags, each containing 110 pounds of powder to fire a 3,700-pound round.

The turret — which extends through seven deck levels of the ship — was "full of gunpowder," said Lt. Cmdr. Chris Neumann, another spokesman.

Two other ships taking part in the same exercise collided yesterday afternoon about 500 miles east of Jacksonville, Fla., causing one minor injury, said Archie Gallwey, a civilian public affairs officer at Norfolk.

Neither the USS Platt, a fleet oiler, nor the frigate USS Tripp was in danger of sinking, Gallwey said. The ships were not in the same area as the Iowa.

The explosion occurred in one of the USS Iowa's gun turrets.



The explosion was in the Iowa's second forward turret

Families of Iowa sailors maintain anxious vigil

By David Chernick
and Matthew Paust
Newport News Daily Press
& Times-Herald

NORFOLK, Va. — Eileen Billingsley's hands shook and her face showed anxiety as she rushed from the Family Service Center near the Norfolk Naval Station yesterday afternoon to join other families gathering at the ship's gymnasium.

Billingsley's husband, Melvin, is a 26-year-old seaman stationed aboard the battleship USS Iowa.

"His general quarters station is one of the 16-inch gun mounts," Billingsley, 25, said. The Iowa has three such gun turrets, one of which exploded and caught fire yesterday.

Only a few hours before, she had been in the couple's apartment, doing the dishes.

"I heard this special news flash on the television," she said. "It was Peter Jennings, and he was announcing that there was an explosion on the Iowa and at least 15 people were hurt."

See FAMILIES, Page 4A

Tucson reaches 101° for earliest triple digit

By John F. Rawlinson
The Arizona Daily Star

Tucson hit a record 101 degrees yesterday, the highest temperature ever recorded so early in the spring, according to modern weather records.

The previous earliest 100-degree reading was on April 30, 1943, said Jack Mazur, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service. Weather service records for Tucson date to 1941.

Today's forecast calls for a high in the upper 90s, but today could be just as hot as yesterday, Mazur said.

The normal average high for April 19 is 83. The previous record high for April 19 was 94, set in 1986.

The hot weather is caused by a high pressure system moving across

the state from the Pacific Ocean, Mazur said.

The good news, he said, is that the system is being pushed slowly eastward into Texas by a low pressure system entering Arizona from California.

"There should be a slow cooling down by the weekend," Mazur said. Does the 100-degree reading mean an extra hot summer, or even an early hot summer?

"There is no correlation at all," Mazur said. "This doesn't indicate what will happen the rest of the year. We just happen to be in the middle of a high pressure system."

The low pressure system will bring some moisture with it, Mazur said, noting that there will be some chance of rain.

WEATHER



101 degrees. Yesterday's high of 101 was the first time since April 30, 1943, that the temperature reached 100 this early in the year. The overnight low was 62. Today is expected to be sunny with some high clouds. High in the upper 90s, overnight low in the mid-60s.

Elsewhere in Arizona, Flagstaff beat its old record by 3 degrees with 77. Phoenix and Window each set new records by 1 degree with highs of 103 and 89, respectively. Yuma was hot at 104, but was 2 degrees short of its record. Details on Page 1A.

Primavera scuttles plan

No apartments. Faced with neighborhood opposition and City Council pressure, Primavera Foundation cancels plans for a southside apartment house for homeless women and children. Page 1B.

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Mexicans arrest winery worker sought in 7 killings

By James H. Malish
The Arizona Daily Star

Mexican federal agents, mounting an anti-drug roadblock near Guaymas, Sonora, yesterday captured a California winery worker sought in last week's slaying of seven people, including his wife and two of his three children, authorities said.

"I'm pretty," Ramon Salcido Bojorquez said in an interview with Televisa last night in Mazatlan while awaiting a flight to Mexico City. "I did the killings in the United States and I expect to be judged there."

Salcido, 28, told Mexican officials that he killed the people in a jealous rage because he thought his wife was having an affair.

In the television interview, he said he came to Mexico to see his parents "for the last time."

Salcido was southbound just before dawn when agents stopped him for a routine inspection, said Vicente Mendonza, a spokesman for the Mexican Attorney General's Office in Mexico City.

Salcido carried no identification and while being questioned appeared nervous, he said.

Salcido, who was traveling alone, later identified himself and told Mexican Federal Judicial Police that he was wanted in the California slayings.

Agents also recognized his name, Mendonza said.

"We understand that he offered no resistance," he said.

The checkpoint was about 130 miles south of Tucson on Mexico Highway 15, the main north-south route that also bisects Sonora. Two weeks ago, officials placed dozens of such roadblocks across northern Mexico as part of

an intensive 90-day drug-interdiction program.

Salcido told investigators that he killed his wife in a jealous rage thinking she was having an affair with one of his co-workers, Tracy Towery, whom he also killed, Mendonza said.

Mendonza said he expected Salcido, who is originally from Los Mochis, Sonora, to be transferred to Mexico City last night for a determination of his residency status and for possible extradition to the United States.

There were conflicting reports about his conviction.

See CAPTURE, Page 4A