

Officials say missile defense system passes test

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES—An interceptor missile destroyed a mock warhead over the Pacific Ocean on Friday in a key test of the nation's missile defense system, officials said.

The 54-foot interceptor shot out of an underground silo at Vandenberg Air Force Base on the central California coast at 10:39 a.m., 17 minutes after the mock warhead was launched from Kodiak Island, Alaska, Lehner said. The interceptor carried a refrigerator-sized "kill vehicle" that locked on to the approaching mock enemy missile and flew into the

4-foot-long warhead at 18,000 mph. Lehner said both disintegrated more than 100 miles above the Earth and a few hundred miles west of Vandenberg. The interceptor's flight lasted 13 minutes.

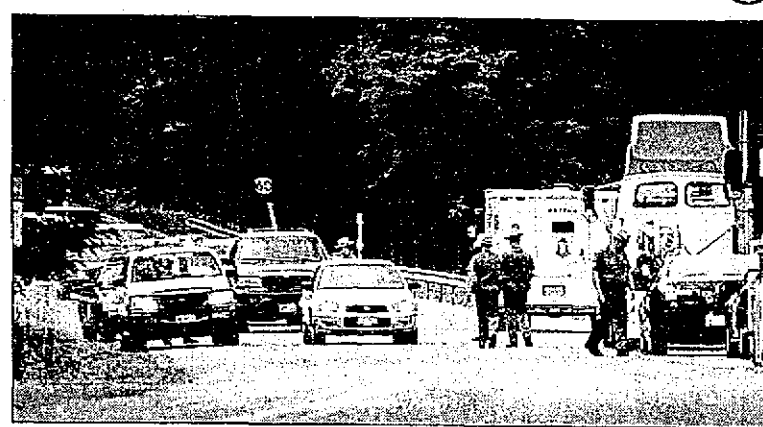
The test was designed to see whether the "kill vehicle" could get close to the warhead to test the tracking and sensor systems which would be used in an actual missile attack.

"It gave us a good chance to measure overall system performance. It was the most operationally realistic test we've had," Lehner said.

Fugitive suspected of shooting troopers

Associated Press

FREDONIA, N.Y. — Two state troopers staking out the home of an escaped convict's ex-girlfriend were shot in an ambush, and authorities Friday were searching the surrounding area for the fugitive.



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New York State Police stop vehicles Friday at a checkpoint on Route 60 in Fredonia. Two troopers were in critical condition after being shot in an ambush Thursday. Police said they believe the gunman was Ralph "Bucky" Phillips, who escaped from jail in April, a state police spokesman said.

Neither trooper saw the suspect, and neither returned fire, but one was able to radio for help, State Police Superintendent Wayne Bennett said. Both officers were hospitalized in critical condition.

"It's clear to me the troopers were ambushed," Bennett said. Police believe the gunman was Ralph "Bucky" Phillips, who escaped from jail in April and may be traveling between Pennsylvania and western New York, Bennett said. Since his escape, he has been suspected in the wounding of another state trooper, numerous burglaries and the theft of firearms from a gun shop.

Friday morning, police checked vehicles on roads approaching the New York state Thruway. Bennett ordered 75 additional troopers to help with the manhunt.

"It's time for Bucky Phillips to go back to jail. Enough is enough," Bennett said.

"He has made threats against police officers via other individuals who either we or the

Pennsylvania State Police have spoken to, so it is my opinion that he clearly would be the number one suspect in the shootings," Bennett said.

The two wounded officers were doing surveillance Thursday evening in the rural western New York town of

Pomfret, home of Phillips' ex-girlfriend, Kasey Crowe. She was charged last week with hindering prosecution for allegedly helping Phillips. Despite a \$50,000 reward, friends and family members have not turned Phillips in, police said.

One trooper was hit in the back with a bullet that penetrated his bullet-resistant vest, Bennett said. The other was shot in the thigh and suffered massive blood loss from a severed artery. Both officers, Joseph Longobardo, 32, and Donald Baker Jr., 38, were in critical condition, Bennett said.

Phillips, 44, escaped on April 2 from the Erie County jail, where he was sent for violating parole on a burglary conviction, police said. He is also wanted in the June 10 shooting of a state trooper near Elmira. Trooper Sean Brown survived after being shot in the abdomen as he approached a stolen car.

Mother gets photos of missing son — 24 years later

Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — The mother of a boy abducted 24 years ago said she's bewildered by two photographs left at her front door, apparently showing her son and two other children bound and gagged.



Johnny Gosch

The old photos appear to show 12-year-old Johnny Gosch with his mouth gagged and his

hands and feet tied. The boy is wearing the same sweat-pants Johnny was wearing when he disappeared while delivering newspapers on the morning of Sept. 5, 1982, his

mother said. "It's like reliving it," Noreen Gosch said Thursday night. "But the bigger picture is, 'Why are they doing this?'"

"Whoever had these photos had them for 24 years. I don't understand why they would do this now. It must be some kind of message."

Gosch said investigators con-

firmed the photos were authentic and likely taken within "hours or days" of the abduction.



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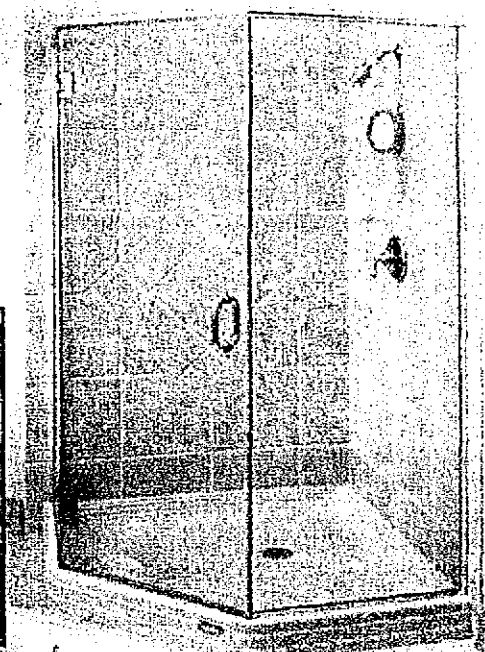
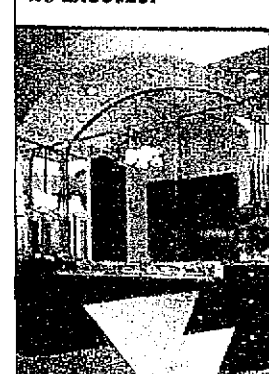
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