

REGION NEWS: AMERICAN INDIAN CHIEFS BLAST PROPOSAL TO STRIP STATE RECOGNITION FROM TRIBES

The Day

SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 2003, NEW LONDON

SERVING EASTERN CONNECTICUT SINCE 1881

VOL. 122, No. 257 32 PAGES 50 CENTS

PREPARING FOR WAR

READY FOR THE REAL THING



Daniel D. King Sr. watches the track of a Tomahawk cruise missile as it is guided into position in the torpedo room of the submarine USS Providence as part of the boat's operations in the eastern Mediterranean Sea on Thursday.

TIM COOK / The Day

'This is very big. Short of foot-and-mouth disease, this is our worst-case disaster.'

Bruce Gresczyk, acting commissioner, state Department of Agriculture

Vaccination plan aimed at stopping chicken flu

State health officials say outbreak at Bozrah egg farm is dire, hope to staunch potential blow to industry

By MATTHEW J. MALONE
Day Staff Writer

Norwich — Hoping to avoid a devastating blow to the regional economy, the state Department of Agriculture is seeking federal approval for a pilot vaccination program to stop an influenza outbreak among chickens at a Bozrah-based egg farm.

Bruce Gresczyk, acting commissioner of the department, told local officials here Friday that the situation at the Kofkoff Egg Farm is dire.

"This is big," he said. "This is very big. Short of foot-and-mouth disease, this is our worst-case disaster."

The avian flu virus is not passed to eggs and poses no threat to humans, but it could spread to other poultry farms and devastate the industry. Gresczyk said that killing the infected birds — the method often used to halt the spread of disease — would result in the collapse of the farm and the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars in state and local revenue.

Already as a result of the outbreak, Japan, a major U.S. poultry importer, placed a ban on all Connecticut poultry.

Kofkoff is the largest egg-laying operation in the Northeast, Gresczyk said. It produces approximately 16.8 million eggs a week, or 873 million annually. In 2001, the entire state produced 883 million eggs, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture statistics.

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Aboard Sub, Practice Makes Perfect

DISPATCHES AT SEA

Editor's Note: Day reporter Robert A. Hamilton and photographer Tim Cook are aboard a Navy submarine in the Mediterranean Sea to begin their firsthand coverage of preparations for war.

Weapons-handling team constantly honing skills on Tomahawk missile system

By ROBERT A. HAMILTON
Day Staff Writer

Aboard the USS Providence — With a slight hydraulic groan, the 4,600-pound stainless steel canister containing a live Tomahawk missile slid in-

to Tube 2, just minutes after the loading process had begun.

"Fastest time in the fleet," bragged one smiling sailor.

The weapons-handling team, 15 men whose battle station on "game day" will be in the torpedo room, has been perfecting its technique since leaving the Naval Submarine Base in Groton last month for the eastern Mediterranean Sea.

Three times a week for the first few weeks, and twice a week more recently, the men have moved "warshots" into the tubes and then backed them

out again. In a combat situation, the boat's ability to carry out the president's orders will depend on how quickly the team can load a missile, back out the empty launch canister, then load another.

While Cmdr. Jon Kan, captain of the Providence, declines to discuss just how many minutes it takes, "I can say we've cut the time significantly."

When Chief Torpedoman Kent R. Hope joined the Navy 15 years ago, the principal weapon in the submarine's arsenal was the Mark 48 torpe-

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Sometimes, Butterfingers can be the best medicine

For submariners, food and entertainment are essential stress-busters

By ROBERT A. HAMILTON
Day Staff Writer

Aboard the USS Providence — What makes a big difference on a combat submarine? Sometimes, all it takes is a Butterfingers candy bar.

When the USS Providence pulled into Crete this month to take on extra supplies before assuming its station in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, the crewmen were actually cheering when a box of Butterfingers was loaded through the hatch, said the ship's captain, Cmdr. Jon Kan.

The boat also took on Skittles, Dove bars, Goldfish and Pemmican beef jerky, all luxuries for the men who make a good

deal of their living under the sea. At times, in fact, the crewmen seemed more interested in discussing milk chocolate than missiles.

Onboard activities include a cribbage tournament, Monday night video-game football playoffs and a version of bingo.

"There's a lot of stress and tension associated with this kind of mission," Kan said. "You've got to find some way to relieve it."

Submarines are known for the quality of their cuisine, which is considered critical to maintaining morale. The thinking is that men can endure long stretches away from home and out of contact with their families as long as they can look forward to three decent meals a day.

Mess Specialist 2nd Class David Rojas said those who serve on submarines know the importance of the galley. Back home, he said, if you go to a restaurant

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Bush, Blair, Aznar hoping to avert diplomatic failure

Trio to hold last-ditch summit Sunday

By RON FOURNIER
AP White House Correspondent



President Bush



Tony Blair

Washington — Losing their U.N. fight, President Bush, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar agreed Friday to take a last-ditch stab at reviving their troubled war resolution at an Atlantic island summit.

Billed as a bid "to pursue every last bit of diplomacy," the Sunday session was hurriedly scheduled amid a cascade of events — all pointing to war.

U.S. warships steamed into the Red Sea within cruise missile range of Iraq. A prominent Muslim cleric urged Iraqis around the world to target American interests and "set them ablaze." Thousands of anti-war demonstrators gathered in Washington for a weekend march on the White House.

Inside the wrought-iron gates of the presidential mansion, Bush's team quickly rejected the latest bid for a diplomatic compromise at the United Nations. "It's a non-starter," White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said of Chile's plan to give Iraq a three-week deadline to comply with new conditions.

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FBI tracks some terrorism suspects from the wild blue

Deployment of spying aircraft increased sharply since Sept. 11

By CURT ANDERSON
Associated Press Writer

Washington — The FBI has a fleet of aircraft, some equipped with night surveillance and eavesdropping equipment, flying America's skies to track and collect intelligence from suspected terrorists and other criminals.

The FBI will not provide exact figures on the planes and helicopters, but more than 80 are in the skies. There are several planes, known as "Nightstalkers," equipped with infrared devices that allow agents to track people and vehicles in the dark.

Other aircraft are outfitted with electronic surveillance equipment so agents can pursue listening devices placed in cars, in buildings and even along streets, or listen to cell-phone calls. Still others fly photography missions, although officials would not describe precise capabilities.

The FBI, which has made counterterrorism its top priority since Sept. 11, 2001, has sharply increased its use of aircraft.

"You want to watch activity, and you want to do it discreetly. You don't want to be sitting around in cars," said Weldon Kennedy, a former FBI deputy director who re-

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INSIDE TODA

NEWS

Grand Scheme? The man accused of kidnapping Elizabeth Smart may have tried to abduct her 18-year-old cousin seven weeks later, authorities say. A4



Pigeons Deployed, Too U.S. Marines of the 7th Regiment in Kuwait are given pigeons to help detect a possible Iraqi chemical or biological attack. A2

WEATHER

Signs Of Spring Today, morning clouds giving way to sunshine. High 43. Sunday, partly sunny and mild. High 54. DB

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COMING SUNDAY:

Easing Into English — At the Buckingham School in Norwich, about 20 percent of the students speak a foreign language. Nevertheless, all students in kindergarten through fifth grade must learn English.

'An Epidemic' — Thousands of children are given dental exams courtesy of the Across the Smiles dental van, and the dentists who examine them are sometimes appalled at what they see.

Marketplace — From laser therapy to nutritional supplements, a look at several ways to look and feel your best.