

From Associated Press reports

British soldiers die in IRA ambush

Northern Ireland

IRA guerrillas waiting in ambush in an apartment they seized shot and killed two British soldiers in civilian clothes riding in an unmarked van outside a Roman Catholic cathedral Thursday.

They were the fourth and fifth soldiers murdered from ambush in a week.

The Irish Republican Army claimed responsibility for the attack, calling the soldiers "plainclothes undercover agents." The IRA said it also was responsible for setting off a 600-pound bomb under a railroad bridge near Newry that closed the main Belfast-Dublin rail line Thursday morning.

The attacks came as British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Cabinet approved a plan to set up a 78-member elected assembly in Northern Ireland this fall as a first step toward restoring partial self-rule.

On March 25, three British soldiers were shot and killed in a crowded West Belfast street by an IRA gang that took over a house, held a family hostage and waited for their prey.

The wave of violence is apparent retaliation for last week's claim by Chief Constable Sir John Hermon that "the terrorists are reeling" from defections and nearly 200 arrests.

Thursday's killings brought to 350 the number of British troops slain in 13 years of sectarian strife. The overall death toll is 2,185.

Polish pilots defect with families

VIENNA, Austria

Two Polish military pilots landed their plane in a field in southern Poland today, picked up their families and two friends and daringly flew to Austria at treetop level.

Austrian police, who initially reported having translation difficulties, at first said the hijackers pulled pistols on a pilot over southern Poland. Later, however, they corrected that version and gave this account:

The two pilots, Andrzej Malec, 31, and Jerzy-Jan Czerwinski, 29, carried out their plan after they had dropped about 10 paratroopers during a training exercise near Krakow in southern Poland.

They forced the mechanic, Boleslaw Wrona, 35, to stay aboard and then staged an emergency landing in a field to pick up their wives and four children and a friend with his daughter.

The flight to Vienna went apparently undetected by military air controllers in Poland and Czechoslovakia.

A police spokesman said "in order to evade detection in

Czechoslovakia the plane was flying so low it grazed treetops. Parts of branches could still be seen on the damaged wings after touchdown."

Mexican volcano claims 12 lives

PICHUCALCO, Mexico

The second volcanic eruption in three days near the Reforma oilfield in southeast Mexico has raised the death toll to at least 12 dead and hundreds injured, rescue workers and doctors reported.

Rescue workers said they still had not determined whether

any bodies were still in three villages at the foot of El Chichonal that were buried under burning lava and ashes from the first eruption of the 4,314-foot volcano early Monday. But Gov. Juan Sabines Gutierrez of Chiapas state told reporters he did not believe the death toll would increase much.

El Chichonal is on the border of Chiapas and Tabasco, about 800 miles southeast of Mexico City.

The land around the volcano was considered among the best in Mexico for coffee and cacao, but experts said it would be years before it would produce again.

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