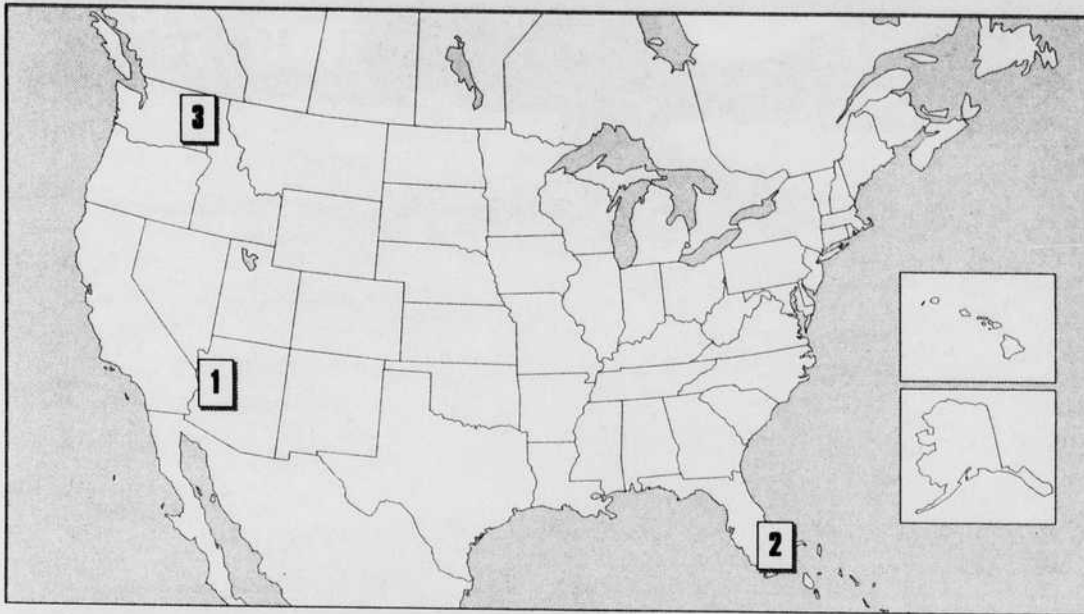


NATIONAL BRIEFS



Wildfire in Arizona almost contained

1 TOPOCK, Ariz. — Firefighters reported significant progress in battling a wildfire that has burned 2,700 acres in a western Arizona wildlife refuge.

The Dike fire was expected to be contained by 6 p.m. Wednesday and under control by the same time today, said Michael Stuckey, a spokesman for the multi-agency team fighting the fire.

"We're looking good," he said. Aerial water drops likely would be discontinued today, and the first of about 250 firefighters would be sent home beginning tonight, Stuckey said.

The fire began Sunday and burned tinder-dry salt cedar, arrow weed and mesquite at the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge along the Colorado River, about 50 miles southwest of Kingman.

Elusive arsonist faces additional charges

2 WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — A convicted arsonist who eluded authorities for 21 years before being arrested in the Seattle area in June made his first appearance in federal court Wednesday to face a charge of fleeing a prison sentence.

Darion Northrup "Sam" Castle, 63, had been living under the name of Mark Bradfield, the prosecutor who won convictions against him for arson and conspiracy in a 1970 boat fire that killed his girlfriend.

Both he and Mary Patricia Kirby, an exotic dancer, were charged in the case. But Kirby died three weeks after the fire of her injuries. Castle was sentenced in 1972 to 10 years in prison.

But Castle managed to avoid prison for five years through a series of appeals. Once his appeals were exhausted, he disappeared.

Men indicted for Spokane bombing

3 SPOKANE, Wash. — An indictment returned in Arkansas alleging a conspiracy to revolt against the federal government also accuses two men of setting off a pipe bomb outside Spokane City Hall in 1996.

One of the two men, Chevie Kehoe also is charged in the 1996 northern Idaho slaying of a fugitive neo-Nazi skinhead, Jon Cox, whose body has never been found.

Charged with Kehoe in the Spokane bombing is Danny Graham, also known as Danny Lee, of Yukon, Okla.

The charge involving the Spokane bombing alleges Kehoe and Graham built an "improvised explosive device" and placed it at the City Hall entrance doors on April 29, 1996. The pipe bomb exploded before city workers began arriving in the morning.



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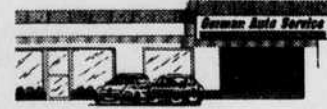
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