FILE NAME: Newspaper & Magazine Articles (NMA)

DATE: 1964 Oct 31

DOC#: NMA027

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Science News Letter - Danger of Lung Cancer in Asbestos Workers

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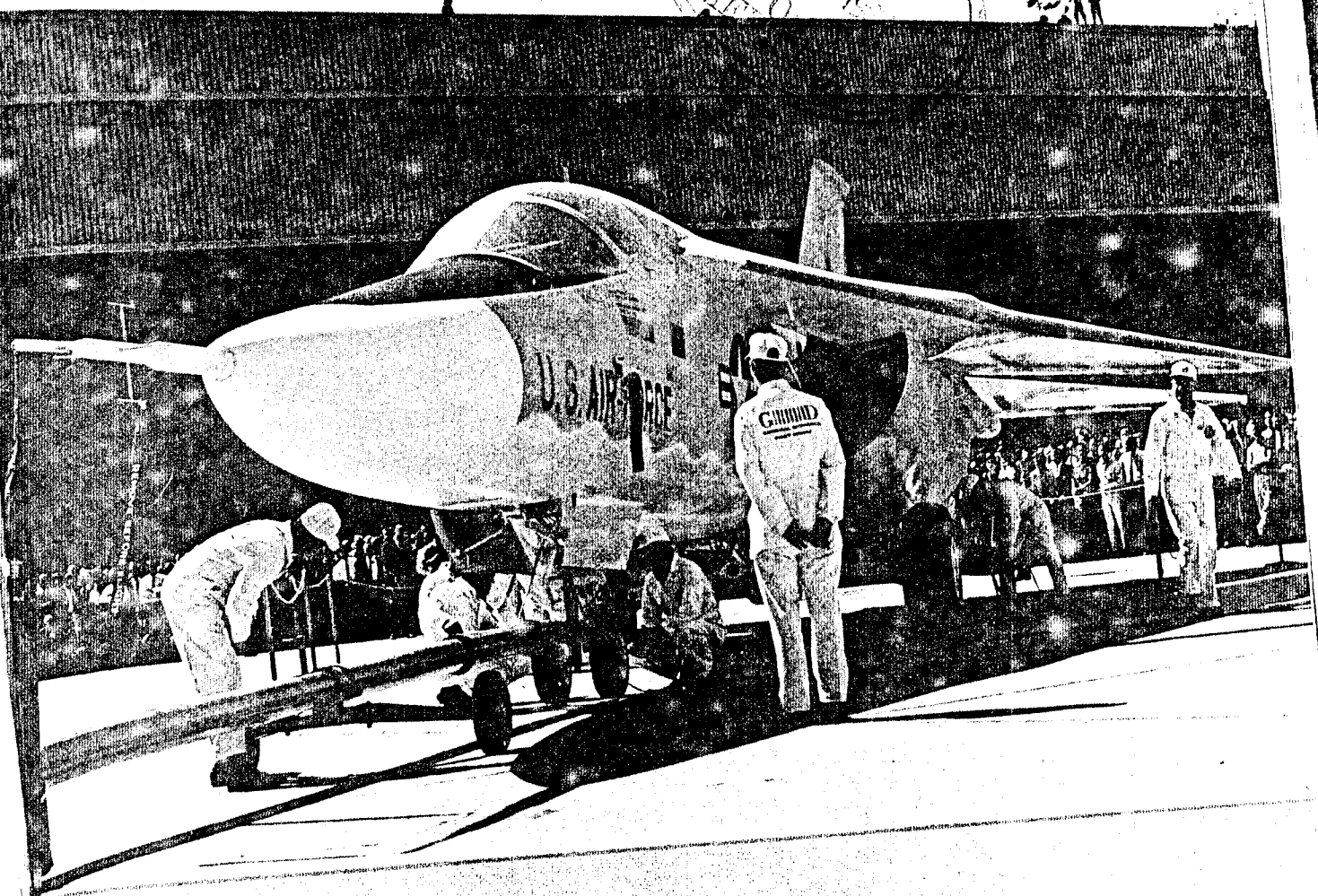
October 31, 1964

VOL. 86, NO. 18 PAGES 273-288

SCIENCE NEWS LETTER®

THE WEEKLY SUMMARY OF CURRENT SCIENCE

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MEDICINE

Danger of Lung Cancer In Asbestos Workers

➤ ASBESTOS WORKERS are in great danger of lung cancer and asbestosis, a serious lung disease caused by inhaling asbestos dust.

A conference on biological effects of asbestos in New York City, sponsored by the New York Academy of Sciences was told that cancer in these workers, either in the chest or elsewhere in the body, is believed related to exposure to asbestos dust.

A study of more than 1,500 asbestos insulation workers in the New York-New Jersey area showed that of the 307 who died during the past 20 years, 40% had died of cancer and 5% to 6% had died of asbestosis.

Of those who started to work with asbestos 40 or more years ago, 94% gave X-ray evidence of asbestosis, Dr. I. J. Selikoff of Mount Sinai Hospital, New York, said.

Another study, reported by Dr. W. J. Smither of the Asbestos Research Council, London, revealed a definite increase in the occurrence of lung cancer among workers in an east end asbestos factory in London.

A surprising discovery, Dr. Smither said, was that a relatively high number of cancers started in the pleura and peritoneum, the membranes lining the chest and abdominal cavities, and covering the organs within these cavities.

Asbestos dust is also affecting the lungs of city dwellers, regardless of whether or not they are asbestos workers, Dr. J. G. Thomson of the University of Cape Town Medical School, Cape Town, South Africa, pointed out.

Autopsies of 500 persons over 15 years of age in Cape Town and 500 more in Miami, Fla., showed asbestos "bodies" in many lung smears. (Asbestos bodies are asbestos fibers coated with an iron-containing substance.)

The use of asbestos has increased greatly in the past 50 years. Asbestos cement products such as pipes, flat and corrugated sheets and shingles, manufactured in most countries of the world, make up the largest use of asbestos. The second largest use of asbestos is in the manufacture of asphalt and vinyl asbestos floor tile.

• Science News Letter, 86:276 October 31, 1964

PUBLIC HEALTH

Urge TB Checks for Department Store Santas

➤ DEPARTMENT STORE Santa Clauses should have tuberculin tests or chest X-rays because of their intimate contact with young children, the National Tuberculosis Association warns. Last year, at least one child developed tuberculosis after climbing up on the lap of a department store Santa Claus to ask for presents.

The association has issued a special Christmas season message to all department stores and other retail establishments employing Santa Clauses to be sure these jolly Saint Nicks are as healthy as they look.

• Science News Letter, 86:276 October 31, 1964

Questions

DENTISTRY—How have Army dentists been coping with mouth and jaw injuries in primitive areas? p. 281.

EDUCATION—What new method is being used to fight illiteracy in underprivileged areas? p. 278.

PSYCHOLOGY—How can a person hear through skin? p. 275.

PUBLIC HEALTH—Why should Santa Clauses be required to take tuberculosis tests? p. 276.

SPACE—What new innovations highlight the recently unveiled F-111 fighter plane, better known as TFX? p. 279.

TECHNOLOGY—How have scientists been taking a new look at the internal structure of the earth? p. 280.

SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

VOL. 86 OCTOBER 31, 1964 NO. 18

Edited by WATSON DAVIS

The Weekly Summary of Current Science, published every Saturday by SCIENCE SERVICE, Inc., 1719 N St., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036. NOrth 7-2255. Cable Address: SCIENSERVC.

Subscription rates: 1 yr., $5.50; 2 yrs., $10.00; 3 yrs., $14.50; ten or more copies in one package to one address, 7½ cents per copy per week; single copy, 15 cents, more than six months old, 25 cents. No charge for foreign postage. Change of address: Three weeks notice is required. Please state exactly how magazine is addressed. Include zip code.

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Printed in U.S.A. Second class postage paid at Washington, D. C. Established in mimeograph form March 13, 1922. Title registered as trademark, U. S. and Canadian Patent Offices. Indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Abridged Guide, and the Engineering Index. Member of Audit Bureau of Circulation.

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