

Illegal Aliens
Search *RP p.1*
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continues
for refugee
mother ship

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RP MON 6 2 1993

The search continues for the mother ship involved in yesterday's seizures at Moss Landing Harbor and Half Moon Bay. It is suspected that the two boats, which picked up approximately 305 undocumented Chinese immigrants, came from a ship located off the coast outside U.S. waters.

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Federal immigration agents and the Coast Guard carried out the seizures of the 65-foot Angel and the 46-foot Pelican from Moss Landing Harbor and Half Moon Bay. The Coast Guard had been monitoring the two boats for several days, but had no further information on the whereabouts of the mother ship.

"We haven't gotten it under custody yet," said Shelly Freier, public affairs specialist with the Coast Guard.

"We've noticed a rise in the number of vessels used for smuggling," Freier, said, adding that an investigation into boats used for smuggling is being carried out all along the West Coast.

Freier said illegal immigrants tend to use large cargo freighters. "They've been converted for human cargo... The cargo has been stripped on the inside where they lay out 55-gallon drums for oil to make it across the ocean." Wood slabs are placed on top of the oil drums for people to lay on. She said the crews are usually Taiwanese, Burmese or Indonesian.

The 305 undocumented immigrants found aboard the Angel and the Pelican were taken yesterday to an Immigration and Naturalization Service detention and deportation facility in Lerdo in the Bakersfield area. The San Mateo County Sheriff's Department and the Monterey County Sheriff's Department assisted with transportation.

"Yesterday's situation stretched our resources equipment-wise and resource-wise," Alan Dwelley, assistant chief patrol agent with the

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► Immigration and Naturalization Service in Livermore, said. He estimates his office has processed between 700 and 800 undocumented immigrants from boat seizures so far this year.

The immigrants are currently being processed and checked out by medical personnel, Dwelley said. There were unconfirmed reports yesterday that some were suffering from tuberculosis and hepatitis, he said.

Prosecution of the boat owners will be handled by the U.S. attorney's office, Dwelley said. If they are prosecuted for alien smuggling, the penalty is up to 5 years in prison and a \$5,000 fine for each undocumented immigrant, he said.