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(Photos: Stephen Wunrow)

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Science Service, which publishes SCIENCE NEWS, is a nonprofit corporation founded in 1921. It gratefully accepts tax-deductible contributions and bequests to assist its efforts to increase the public understanding of science, with special emphasis on young people. More recently, it has included in its mission increasing scientific literacy among members of underrepresented groups. Through its Youth Programs it administers the International Science and Engineering Fair, the Science Talent Search for the Westinghouse Science Scholarships, and publishes and distributes the *Directory of Student Science Training Programs for Precollege Students*.

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Letters

U.S. role in Gulf War illness

Both Senator Riegle's and Senator Rockefeller's May 1994 hearings concluded that all 695,000 troops who served in the Gulf War were exposed to chemical and biological toxins ("Desert Storm's Medical Quandary," SN: 6/18/94, p.394). Who did this? Why wasn't the threat detected? Why weren't our troops protected? Simple. We did it to ourselves!

In the rush to attempt to protect the troops from possible attack, all soldiers were given a nerve agent called pyridostigmine bromide. Approximately 150,000 were inoculated with anthrax vaccine, and 8,000 also received experimental botulism toxin shots.

Rockefeller's hearings concluded that the use of these agents would explain the reactions many veterans have reported. Both senators asked for a review of the use of biotoxin vaccines on Gulf War soldiers. They also asked for a presumption of service connection so vets can receive proper medical treatment.

Gulf War veterans were bravely prepared to

face chemical and biological warfare; I hope the Defense Department gives these heroes the attention they deserve.

*Stephen Salgaller
Lawndale, Calif.*

All coalition land vehicles used in Operation Desert Storm employed an inverted V shape to prevent attrition due to friendly fire. The watercolor on your cover shows the symbol in its uninverted, incorrect form.

*Roberto De León González
San Juan, P.R.*

Breast implants still dangerous

"Implants almost exonerated" (SN: 6/18/94, p.389) discounts the seriousness of silicone-induced disease and misleads the public into believing that the recent Mayo study provides substantial proof of silicone-gel breast implant safety. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Dr. Sidney Wolf of the Public Citizen Health Research Group called this study "incredibly misleading." He stated that the study popula-

tion was too small, that the medical records could have underreported the incidence of problems, and that other recent studies indicate that the silicone gels used in implants have various complex effects on the immune system.

There is no doubt that those with vested interests in this issue will introduce even more biased studies instead of addressing the medical needs of women injured by such defective, fraudulently marketed devices. So it's politics as usual and "consumer beware."

*L. P. Thomas
Lane, Kan.*

CORRECTION

"Tick Threats" (SN: 7/16/94, p.44) states that Lyme disease and ehrlichiosis require different drug treatments; tetracycline may be used to treat both diseases. Also, the two ticks illustrated on p.44 are a female (left) and a male (right) *Amblyomma americanum*. The bacterium causing Rocky Mountain spotted fever is *Rickettsia rickettsii*.

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