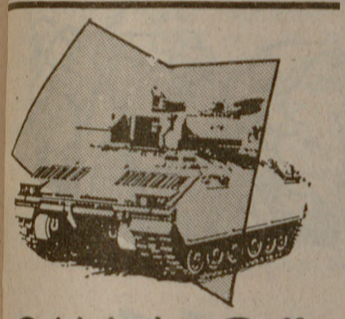


Persian Gulf perches on brink

Associated Press

The midnight deadline for Iraqi president Saddam Hussein to pull his forces out of Kuwait passed Wednesday and more than 680,000 U.S. and allied troops began a new countdown — to war.

Barring an attack by Iraq, the start of a Persian Gulf war lay in the hands of President Bush and allied leaders. Bush, armed with congressional authorization to drive Iraq from Kuwait, was described Tuesday as resolute and "at peace with himself."



Crisis in the Gulf

- Bush's tactics questioned/Page 2
- Crisis in the Gulf/Page 3

Iraq declared a "furnace of hell" awaits anyone trying to dislodge its 45,000 troops from Kuwait, taken over in an Iraqi blitz on Aug. 2. What Saddam faced was thousands of combat aircraft, scores of warships and some of the world's most sophisticated weapons, spearheaded by 115,000 U.S. troops.

The Defense Department said Iraqi forces in Kuwait were continuing to dig in against a multinational force that included 35,000 troops from Britain, 10,000 from France, 30,500 from Saudi Arabia and 38,500 from Egypt. The Pentagon said U.S. forces ran battle drills and flew air combat exercises in the hours before the deadline.

NBC News said Tuesday night that B-52 bombers had been moved to bases in a gulf country it did not identify. The Air Force has never conceded that B-52s have been assigned to Operation Desert Shield, but a detachment is known to have been based at Diego Garcia, in the Indian Ocean.

Lt. Col. Stuart Wagner, a Pentagon spokesman, said he could not

See Deadline/Page 8



JAY JANNER/The Battalion

Student protesters march for peaceful resolution

By JAYME BLASCHKE
Of The Battalion Staff

Nearly 100 people gathered outside Texas A&M's Academic Building seven hours before the United Nations deadline to protest the use of force to resolve the Persian Gulf Crisis.

Chanting "No blood for oil," and "Peace conference, not war," the protestors marched across A&M to the corner of University Drive and Texas Avenue, where the Medicine Tribe organized a candlelight vigil.

Passing cars honked support for the rally as protesters lined the roadside and waved signs with anti-war slogans.

The U.N. deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait was at midnight last night.

Susanne Chase, whose brother is stationed in Saudi Arabia, told the crowd the United States had no right

to go to war with Iraq.

"The politicians in Washington are not representing our interests," Chase said. "They are going to war with an army that is 65 percent minority. The minorities of this country are going to suffer the most in any conflict. That is not democracy."

"Secretary of State James Baker said Nov. 29 for Iraq to respect the U.N. deadline or risk all," she said. "I'm saying if the president commits this country to war, Bush will risk all."

Irwin Tang, an organizer of the event, said he supported U.S. troops, and that was why he was protesting war.

"If we let sanctions work, then no Americans will die, but Bush is dragging this country into war," Tang said.

"Saddam Hussein must be stopped, but not by fighting," Tang

See March/Page 8

Liberty Clinton (left) joined peace marchers in a candlelight vigil at the corner of University and Texas avenues. (below) The marchers were countered by students who support U.S. policies.



KEVIN IVY/The Battalion

U.S. investigates Chinese persecution Student alerts Congress

By LYNETTE CLARK
Of The Battalion Staff

The Chinese government has begun a new round of persecution against demonstrators involved in events that led to the Tiananmen Square massacre, a Texas A&M Chinese graduate student told U.S. congressional leaders last week.

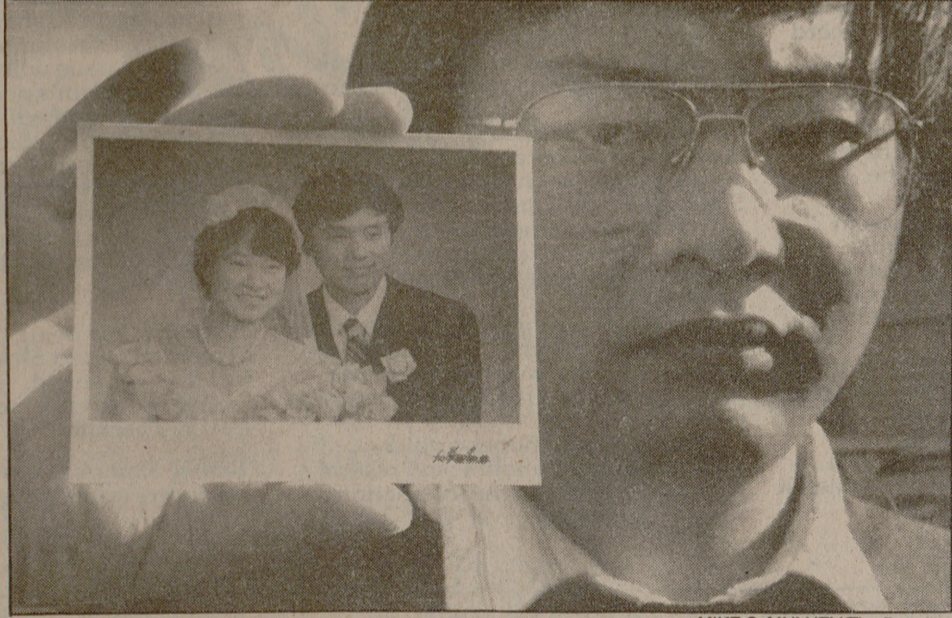
Ge Xun, a physics graduate student and president of A&M's China Club, returned to College Station late Sunday after a week of meetings in Washington, D.C. with Assistant Secretary of State Richard Schifter, congressmen, Chinese student leaders and experts on China.

While in the nation's capital, Ge said he voiced his concerns about human rights violations now taking place in China.

"For so long, they have done nothing, but now that the gulf situation is so tense, they want to take this opportunity to finish this business," Ge said.

Ge went to China last month after reading that a close friend had been arrested for participating in the Tiananmen Square demonstrations.

"I worked with Wang Juntao for two years at the Institute of Atomic



MIKE C. MULVEY/The Battalion

Ge Xun, a physics graduate student at Texas A&M, holds a picture of his friend and his friend's wife. Ge recently went to China to help gain his friend's release from state authorities.

Energy outside Beijing," Ge said. "I first learned of his arrest when I read a report that included a plea for help from his wife."

"We were very good friends, and I felt very deeply that I should go to China to help," Ge said.

In a statement prepared before his departure, Ge said he believes Wang Juntao and other demonstrators are innocent.

"Their behavior did not violate current law in mainland China," Ge said.

"I don't believe those people wanted to overthrow the government," Ge said. "They just wanted to bring some change."

Ge left Dec. 9 for Beijing. Once he arrived, he began his search for information about Wang's case.

"Each place I went, they were prepared for me," he said. "They gave me no information and would not let me know the truth."

Ge said officials asked him if his friend had been secretly or publicly arrested.

"There they admitted they have secret arrests in China," he said. "They also told me that Wang was probably a political prisoner."

See China/Page 8

A&M students called for duty in Middle East

By MIKE LUMAN
Of The Battalion Staff

Twenty-nine students have withdrawn from Texas A&M after being called to active military duty in the Middle East, according to the latest University figures.

Lt. Col. Donald Johnson, assistant commandant of the Corps of Cadets, said the 29 students in Saudi Arabia are members of U.S. reserve units, and more departures can be expected.

About one-fourth of the students called to active duty are members of the Corps, he said.

Pegi Morgan with Student Judicial Programs, the office that handles withdrawals for the University, said all the students called are men.

She said six of the 29 reservists are graduate students, 10 are seniors, four are juniors, seven are sophomores and two are freshmen.

Students leaving the University for military obligations must bring copies of their military orders to the Student Judicial Programs office.

Other than that, the withdrawal process is the same as for any student, Morgan said.

Johnson said it will be difficult to communicate with an individual in the Middle East unless that person left a specific address.

"We don't have any idea where all of them are, maybe friends or a family member would know," he said. "That's all I could suggest."

The Aggie Mom's clubs in Texas urge anyone with the Middle East address of an Aggie listed here or a former student on

See Reservists/Page 8

Inauguration '91 Richards reaffirms ethics vow, heralds start of 'a new Texas'

AUSTIN (AP) — Democrat Ann Richards, sworn in Tuesday as Texas' 45th governor, said her administration would be one for the history books.

"Today, the historians will record that a new administration, different from any in the past, began," Richards told cheering supporters after being sworn in to succeed retiring Republican Bill Clements.

"The people of Texas are back, and they're waiting, and they're watching us," she said.

The Department of Public Safety estimated that 15,000 to 20,000 people blanketed the Capitol lawn to watch Richards become the first woman governor since Miriam "Ma" Ferguson left the office in 1935.

Richards was frequently interrupted by cheers and applause as she sounded the "new Texas" theme she used to launch her campaign in June 1989.

"Twenty or 50 or 100 years from now, school children are going to open their textbooks — or perhaps switch on their video texts — and they're going to see a picture," she said. "They will see us standing proudly on this bright winter noon. And looking through the eyes of a child, we will seem as distant and ancient as portraits of our ancestors seem to us."

"Today, we have a vision of a

- Inauguration celebrations/Page 7
- Pictorial coverage/Page 4

Texas where opportunity knows no race, no gender, no color — a glimpse of the possibilities that can happen in government if we simply open the doors and let the people in. Tomorrow, we have to build that Texas."

Richards took the oath of office under a clear sky shortly after noon. It was administered by Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Tom Phillips. Representatives of 35 foreign countries and the four Mexican states that border the United States also attended, officials said.

Wearing a white suit, Richards waved both arms over her head as the crowd cheered.

Richards, a former school teacher, said the new Texas would put a premium on schools, making sure every child receives an education that "allows them to claim the full promise of their lives."

She said state government must act in a manner "where every decision is measured against the high standard of ethics and true commitment to the public trust."

Repairs close Ross Street

Ross Street will be closed for an indefinite period of time between Spence and Bizzell streets beginning today.

Adverse weather conditions during Christmas break delayed pavement repairs by the Texas A&M Physical Plant.

Tom Williams, director of Parking, Transit and Traffic Services, says on-campus shuttle bus routes along Ross Street will be modified to run around the perimeter of campus. Any changes with bus routes will be posted for commuters.