

Texas A&M The Battalion

Vol. 90 No. 79 USPS 045360 26 Pages

College Station, Texas

Thursday, January 24, 1991

Call to Duty

A&M cadet called to service by Marines

See Life Style



Troops dig in for ground war

DHAHRAN, Saudi Arabia (AP) — U.S. armored cavalrymen skirmished with Iraqis in the first ground clash at the northern border, where vast fleets of tanks maneuvered and dug in on the desert floor Wednesday for the land war just over the horizon.

The Americans captured six Iraqis and suffered two slight casualties, the U.S. command said. It denied a Baghdad claim that the Iraqis also seized prisoners.

Iraq apparently fired off a double-barreled volley of Scud missiles at both Saudi Arabia and Israel. One Scud was intercepted by two Patriot defense missiles over northern Israel.

There were no immediate reports of damage or casualties in either place.

The Israeli leadership was holding its fire Wednesday at the urging of the United States.

Kuwaiti oil installations burned on, sabotaged by the Iraqis, and showered nearby Iran with "black rain."

The skies over Iraq itself began to clear, and allied air commanders



commanders said. Iraq announced it was suspending gasoline sales.

More and more Iraqis were emerging from their shelters in Baghdad, said CNN's Peter Arnett, the only Western journalist allowed to report from the Iraqi capital.

Commerce seemed to be resuming, Baghdad residents were shopping at the central market and water trucks were making their rounds, he said.

The allied army is deployed along the 130-mile Saudi-Kuwaiti border and farther west, along the Iraqi-Saudi border, where the desert-trained 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment from Fort Bliss, Texas, is believed to be conducting reconnaissance and guarding the allied force's western flank.

Wednesday's first report of a ground action came from the Iranian news media, which said Iraq reported its forces had attacked enemy troops in Saudi territory and captured allied prisoners.

The U.S. command reported that 3rd Armored Cavalry troopers were manning an observation post near

the Saudi-Iraqi border late Tuesday when they came under small-arms fire from an Iraqi patrol and returned fire.

Two Americans were slightly wounded and returned to duty after treatment, and six Iraqis were captured, the command said. It denied that any Americans had been captured.

American armored units continued maneuvering into place along the frontier Wednesday after a days-long spell of rain and drizzle that turned desert-dry areas into small lakes and created sinkholes that can bog down a tank.

Commanders have begun to slow the pace of combat exercises at the front lines so soldiers can rest and equipment can be kept in good shape for what could be a prolonged ground battle.

A ground offensive is not expected until February. American tank officers, like Marine Capt. Rob Philon, know it will not be a rollover.

Philon's M-60 tanks will have to go up against Iraq's Soviet-made T-72s.

A&M official describes 'worst-case scenario'

By MIKE LUMAN
Of The Battalion Staff



An Arab-Israeli war is part of the "worst-case scenario" for events in the Middle East, the deputy director for administration of Texas A&M's Mosher Institute for Defense Studies said Wednesday night.

Dr. Art Blair, speaking as part of the MSC Great Issues program titled "War in the Gulf," said an Arab-Israeli conflict could trigger Saudi officials to order U.S. troops off Saudi land.

"There would be all kinds of trouble," Blair said. "If you want to pray at night, pray this doesn't become an Arab-Israeli war."

To make his point, Blair said

the 250 students and faculty attending the program likely would be sent to the Middle East if the Arab coalition fell apart.

He added he did not think events would deteriorate to that point and said allied forces almost certainly will triumph over Iraq.

Dr. Alex Mintz, another panelist and an A&M professor of political science, said he thinks Israel will retaliate massively if Saddam Hussein launches chemical

See Issues/Page 6

Petroleum expert: Events in gulf area determine oil prices

Embargo freezes supply, demand

By JAYME BLASCHKE
Of The Battalion Staff

Iraq's destruction of Kuwaiti oil fields should have little or no effect on the world's oil markets, says the head of the Texas A&M petroleum engineering department.

"The wells in Kuwait and Iraq both, due to the embargo, are shut in for all practical purposes," says Dr. W. D. Von Gonten. "Whether the well is blowing out is not going to have any effect on the amount of production areas in the world."

Von Gonten says oil prices might fluctuate in response to events in the Persian Gulf, but not because of changes in supply and demand.

"Kuwait has about 300 to 400 oil wells, where the United States has over 600,000 oil wells," he says. "In comparison, they don't have many oil wells, but then again they aren't a very large country."

Von Gonten says destruction of the wells will have little long-term effect on Kuwait's oil business.

Kuwait possesses about 100 billion barrels of oil in underground deposits, he says. One well, burning thousands of barrels a day, would not hurt the nation much, Von Gonten says.

"If every well in the country blows (up) and you lose a million barrels of

oil from every one, you've lost 400 million barrels," Von Gonten says. "That's only four-tenths of a billion, and Kuwait has 100 billion barrels."

He says that beside losing oilfield equipment, there would be little actual loss to Kuwait.

Despite the massive amounts of smoke produced by such fires, he says there is little environmental hazard.

"At one time in the Middle East, they flared all the natural gas produced with oil, and so millions of cubic feet of gas a day was being burned," he says.

Burning oil will have even less of an effect on the environment than natural gas, Von Gonten says.

"This is not a catastrophe," he says.

Destruction of the Kuwaiti oil fields poses little additional hazard to U.S. troops, he says.

"You've got the danger of the fire itself, but since the products of combustion are going to rise, they're not going to settle on the ground where soldiers are going to be exposed to them," he says.

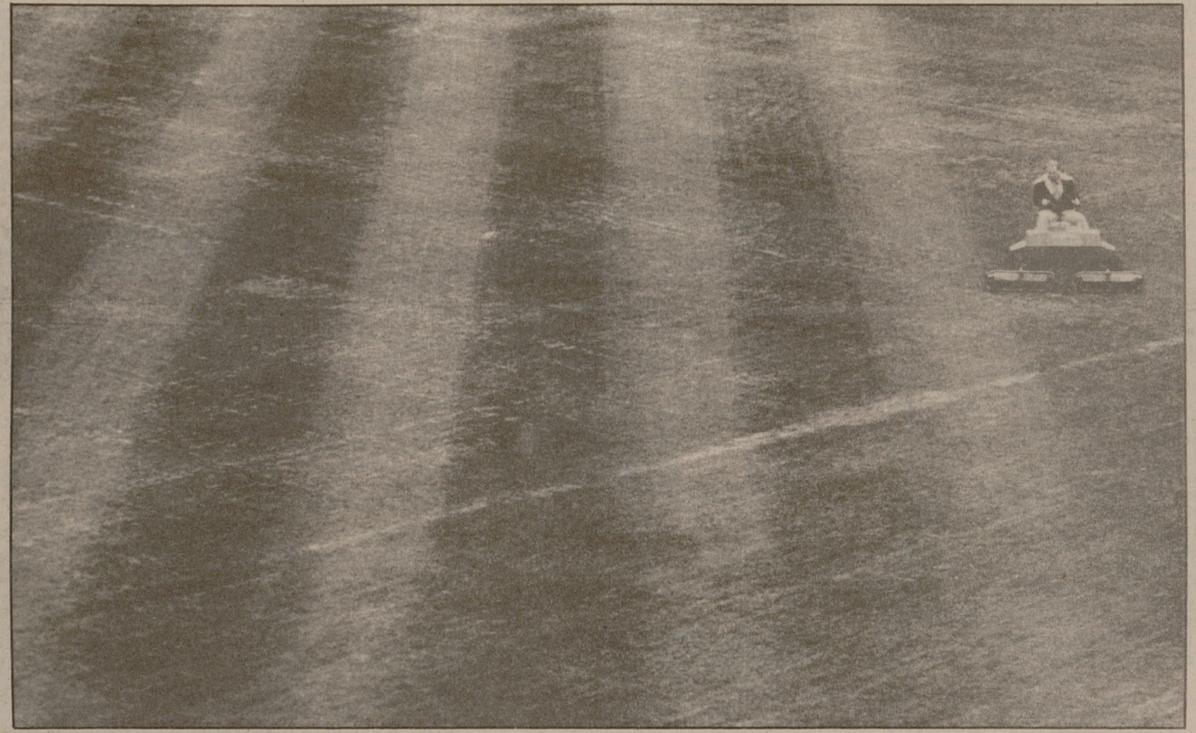
"After the smoke is carried by the prevailing winds for a hundred miles, it's pretty much dissipated," he adds.

The biggest problem will be capping the wells, which can't be done until the area is secured by allied forces, Von Gonten says.

"Most of the world's oil field fire-fighting equipment is based here in Texas," he says. "If all the wells go up, it will take more crews than we have to put them out and cap them."

"That takes anywhere from weeks to months, and you can't do it if people are shooting at you," he says.

Left in the outfield



Daniel Cornal of the A&M Maintenance Department mows the outfield stripes in Olsen Field early Wednesday morning.

Student Senate backs Bush, allied troops 42-3

By ELIZABETH TISCH
Of The Battalion Staff

The Texas A&M Student Senate passed a resolution after an emotional debate Wednesday night supporting both President Bush's policy in the Persian Gulf and allied troops deployed there.

Bush has sent an open letter to college students asking for support of the U.S. presence in the Gulf. The Senate voted in favor of the policy, 42-3.

Finance Chairman David Brooks, who introduced the resolution, said the impact of Wednesday's vote goes beyond politics.

"The rationale behind this is much more than

a political statement," Brooks said. "It is our duty as members of the Student Government, the elected voice, to represent how the student body feels."

Senator Julie Chamberlin, one of the three who voted against the resolution, asked the stu-

See Senate/Page 6

Bike lanes in, around A&M expand due to parking garages

By TROY D. HALL
Of The Battalion Staff

Commuting by bicycle in and around Texas A&M's campus probably will be safer and easier this fall after completion of the University Center parking garage.

Tom Williams, director of Parking, Transit and Traffic Services, says upon completion of the University Center garage, street parking will no longer be necessary, freeing those areas for bike lanes.

"We hope to have all of our bike lanes completed by the end of the summer as we are able to move people from the streets into our new parking garage," he says.

Bike lanes need to be developed along streets before bicycle problems can be solved, Williams says. That is only the first step to making bicycle commuting more accessible, he says.

"Bike paths then will need to be developed around campus in off-street areas where we do not have connections between streets," he says.

Student involvement is an integral

part of developing an effective bicycling system on campus, Williams says.

"We don't have an implementation plan, nor do we have rules and regulations," he says. "That is something that has to be a student-generated activity because it is the students that are going to be affected."

Williams says the A&M Student Government, through Ty Clevenger's office, is supposed to be working on a plan implementing rules and regulations for bicyclists.

Bicycle traffic has gone uncontrolled for so many years that it has become a dangerous situation, he says.

"The streets occupying bike lanes are not the best in the world because some of our streets are in such disrepair," Williams says. "Our new Bizell Street is the example of the way we want all streets on the campus to eventually look like."

The future of the bicycle system, however, does not stop at the A&M campus.

A study co-funded by the University and the Texas Highway Department was conducted by the Texas Transportation Institute.

Dr. Joe Blaschke, assistant research engineer with Texas Transportation Institute, says the study was conducted to determine where routes in Bryan and College Station could be constructed to encourage people to commute by bicycle.

Blaschke says the study found no shortage of bicycle areas on campus, but some areas were used much more than others.

A questionnaire survey also was conducted to determine interest among students, faculty members and staff for developing a community-wide bicycle system.

Blaschke says 25 percent of the people surveyed say they would ride a bicycle to campus. He says that means approximately 12,500 people would commute by bicycle.

"I don't think those figures are quite true, but certainly there are several thousand people who have an interest," Blaschke says. "That is why we want to corner that market and give them an opportunity to use their bicycles."

He says the survey found bicycle

routes would be most useful for people in a one-mile radius around A&M, but there also was interest by people living up to three miles away.

"We designated potential routes in residential areas where people responded to the questionnaires, where they lived and where they showed interest in the bicycle routes," he says.

The study results, however, still are in draft form, Blaschke says.

"The process will begin once we have a chance to get together with the cities and the Texas Highway Department to get the system approved," he says. "We are still in the infant stage, but the University, through Tom Williams, has done a lot of the work on campus already."

Williams and Blaschke agree the key to the success of an effective bicycle system is time and money.

"The key to the whole study was an interest by a number of people," Blaschke says. "There is no question there is great potential for a good bicycle system in place on campus; but once such a system is in place, we are talking about lots of additional control."



Removal of street parking allows for better bike lanes.