

Texas A&M The Battalion

Vol. 90 No. 85 USPS 045360 8 Pages

College Station, Texas

Friday, February 1, 1991

Troops win back Khafji

Iraq claims capture of first U.S. women soldiers

DHAHRAN, Saudi Arabia (AP) — Allied forces bombed Iraqi armor headed toward Kuwait and snatched back a Saudi Arabian town from defiant Iraqi tank troops Thursday after lighting the sky in a fierce all-night battle.

Iraq said its incursions at Khafji and other border points signaled the start of a "thunderous storm" on the desert floor. Another U.S. plane — with 14 people aboard — was shot down behind Iraqi lines.

A U.S. air squadron commander, Lt. Col. Dick White, spoke to pool reporters Thursday of intelligence reports that 800 to 1,000 Iraqi vehicles were moving toward the border. But after returning from a flight, he said he did not actually see a large number of vehicles.

Members of Congress said after briefings from Pentagon officials that a modified C-130 equipped with small cannons and machine guns, part of a Special Operations mission, was shot down over Kuwait. Sen. Jo-

seph Lieberman, D-Conn., said 14 people were on the plane.

Baghdad also claimed it captured the first women prisoners of the 2-week-old war. The United States refused to confirm the report, but conceded that a woman was among two soldiers missing in action.

Allied aircraft continued to dump a hailstorm of munitions on Iraq's front-line troops in Kuwait, the crack Republican Guards. Iraq, in turn, lofted another Scud missile into the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Israeli officials said there were no casualties.

But a grim ritual began on the U.S. home front — the military began notifying the families of 11 Marines who were killed in the fighting around the Saudi town of Khafji.

"He believed in his country," said Barbara Anderson, the mother of Marine Cpl. Stephen Bentzlin, 23, of San Clemente, Calif. "He was there for all of us, not only for himself but for all of us."

President Bush declared Sunday to be a national day of prayer. He asked people of all faiths "to say a special prayer on that day, a prayer for peace, a prayer for the safety of our troops, a prayer for their families, a prayer for the innocents caught up in this war."

Allied military officials played down the significance of the tank battle that raged for the better part of two days in and around Khafji, on the Persian Gulf coast below the Kuwait border.

"About as significant as a mosquito on an elephant," grumbled the allied commander, U.S. Army Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf.

There were hints, however, that the Iraqis might try to draw more blood from the allied elephant.

The battle at Khafji "is a first warning from the faithful men in Iraq to all U.S. occupiers that they will leave with their dead in bags and coffins," Iraqi radio warned. An Iraqi newspaper forecast "a thun-

derous storm blowing on the Arab desert."

During the battle for Khafji, another battle raged 40 miles to the west, near the Kuwaiti town of al-Wafra, where Saudi troops and U.S. airplanes exchanged fire with Iraqi positions. U.S. Marines reported evidence of five or six Iraqi divisions massing near there.

At the U.S. military's daily briefing in Riyadh, the Saudi capital, Army Brig. Gen. Pat Stevens said he couldn't confirm the report. But he did confirm the assessment that Schwarzkopf delivered the day before — Saddam Hussein is far from finished.

"I have no doubt, based on what we've seen over the last two or three days, that he may very well attempt some further action," Stevens said. "He may be looking for some sort of ... victory. He may be looking for some sort of an action from which he can gain confidence."

Concerns of terrorism cancel study abroad trip

By JAYME BLASCHKE
Of The Battalion Staff

Threats of terrorism have canceled at least one Texas A&M Study Abroad program this semester, while putting other trips in jeopardy.

Study Abroad's only formal program this spring — a semester in Italy — was canceled because of the threat of terrorism.

But Mona Rizk-Finne, director of the A&M Study Abroad program, says Study Abroad has no plans to cancel any summer programs yet.

"We hope the situation improves, but we are taking every precaution," Finne says.

Finne says no exact figures for students studying abroad this semester are available, but the number is somewhere between 400 and 500. There are no A&M students in the Middle East.

She says the Study Abroad of-

rice is in daily contact with the State Department to discuss the latest developments in the Persian Gulf.

"No other universities have canceled their programs, so we're just following suit," Finne says.

Stanford University, however,

STUDY ABROAD

recalled all of its students from its study abroad program in Italy shortly after the war erupted.

Dr. Carolyn Adair, director of Student Activities, says students have expressed concern about the threat of terrorism on the Student Activities trip to Italy.

"We haven't had the response from the students as in recent years," Adair says. "Some people have signed up, but we don't have enough people to go yet."

Adair says the Italy trip has not been canceled, but the possibility

See Terrorism/Page 8

Former official offers expertise as honorary guest speaker

By TROY D. HALL
Of The Battalion Staff

Former Lt. Gov. William Hobby Jr. will meet with Texas A&M students and faculty members next week to provide expertise on how Texas government works.

Hobby, the first guest in a new Distinguished Lecturer in Residence program, will discuss issues like the state's financial problems in classes next week.

"There is no question this year's state legislature faces the most serious financial crisis it has faced in the over 18 years I have been directly involved in government," Hobby says.

The University and Bryan-College Station will benefit from his long-term political experience in Texas, he says.

"Given the current environment of state government, I'm going to give a general talk about the financial and educational problems facing the state," Hobby says.

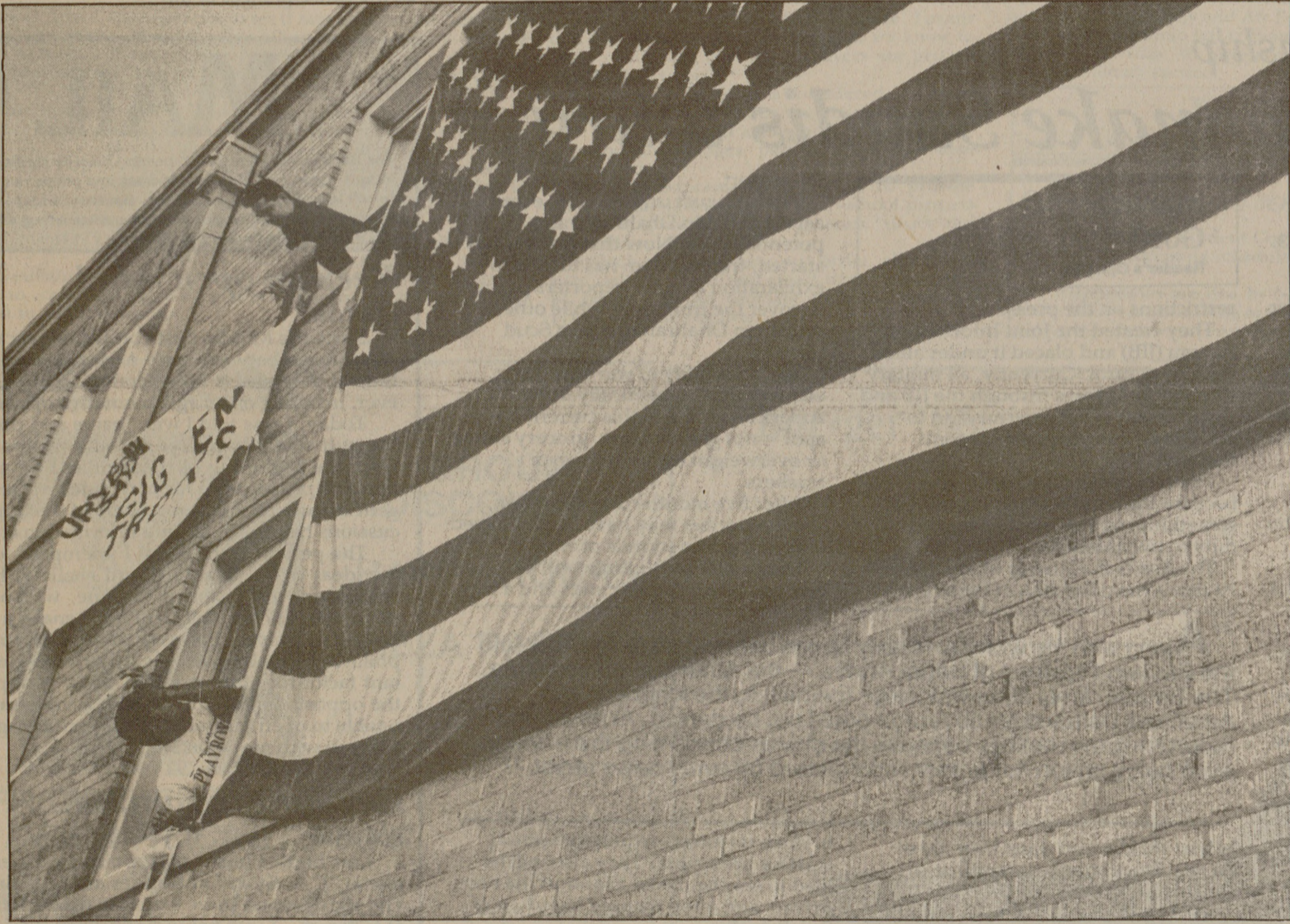
A public lecture will begin at 7 p.m. Thursday in Rudder Forum. Hobby also will attend a graduate public administration class and an undergraduate honors political science class.

"I am extremely excited about the program and honored to be the first distinguished lecturer," he says. "I hope I can make some important contributions to the program."

The Distinguished Visiting Lecturer in Residence program asks a prominent political figure to spend a

See Hobby/Page 8

Gig 'em troops



Gerald Hardt, a senior management major from Houston (top), and Chris Ribardo, a junior history major from Bryan, hang a "Gig 'em troops" sign Thursday at Puryear Hall in support of U.S. soldiers fighting in the Persian Gulf War.

RICHARD S. JAMES/The Battalion

Arms control expert says U.S.S.R. slips to 'bad days'

By MIKE LUMAN
Of The Battalion Staff

The Soviet Union is drifting back to the "bad old days" of public oppression, secret police terror tactics and civil rights crackdowns, said a Texas A&M official and former arms control negotiator.

Dr. Ronald L. Hatchett, deputy director for programs at A&M's Mosher Institute for Defense Studies, said Thursday recent military action in Lithuania is one of many indications the Soviet government is returning to central control.

Other indications are the "sickening" choices of hardliners to fill vacant Kremlin posts and the firing and resignation of several reformists, he said.

Alexander Yakovlev, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's right-hand-man since 1985, stepped down from his post last week.

Hatchett described his replacement, Gennadi Yanayev, as "a hard-line thug, a throwback, a bully from the old school."

Gorbachev selected Yanayev for the post. Hatchett said he does not know if the decision was personal choice or Communist Party influence.

Soviet Foreign Minister Edward Shevardnadze resigned Dec. 20.

Vadim Bakatin, a liberal and former head of the Soviet Internal Ministry, recently was fired and replaced by hardliner and former KGB operative Boris Pugo.

See Soviet/Page 8

Soviet lawmen vote to suspend army, police patrols

MOSCOW (AP) — The Russian legislature voted Thursday to ask President Mikhail S. Gorbachev to suspend what it called unconstitutional and potentially destabilizing plans to mount joint army and police patrols in Soviet cities as early as Friday.

The effect of the vote was impossible to gauge in the increasingly tense Soviet political atmosphere, but it reflected anxiety among Russia's federation president and other reformers that hard-liners were preparing to take control.

"Who knows what might happen in the next 24-hours?" federation president Boris N. Yeltsin said during debate on the resolution. The Russian legislature, on a 130-13 vote, asked Gorbachev to suspend plans for the patrols while the issue was reviewed by the national Constitutional Surveillance Committee and considered by the elected governments of the 15 Soviet republics.

Soviet officials last week disclosed a decree signed secretly on Dec. 29 by Defense Minister Dmitri Yazov and Interior Minister Boris

Pugo authorizing the joint patrols as a means to fight crime.

On Tuesday, Gorbachev established a committee to oversee the patrols and said they could not occur without the agreement of local elected governments. Pugo also said the patrols would not take place without local consent and would not involve armored personnel carriers.

But apprehension increased Thursday that hard-liners in the Communist Party, the military, the police and the KGB would send the

patrols into the streets on Friday in an effort to consolidate what appears to be their growing influence over Gorbachev.

The Russian resolution said in part that "using armed military forces in the streets of cities could lead to a destabilization of the political situation, to limits or violations of the rights of free citizens, including the rights of the troops."

Parts of the patrol decree violated constitutional provisions covering emergency powers, it said.

Oil clean-up woes Lack of microbe research worries A&M scientist

By GREG MT. JOY
Of The Battalion Staff

"Oil-eating" microbes are an untested and potentially dangerous method of cleaning up oil spills and should not be used in the Persian Gulf, warns a Texas A&M research scientist.

Dr. Mahlon C. Kennicutt II of the College of Geosciences' Geochemical and Environmental Research Group says the microbes have not been tested enough in field situations and could worsen the gulf spill.

"To be effective on a spill, the microbes need to be used early in order to break up the oil quickly," Kennicutt says. "Proponents of the microbes claim clean-up can be finished in hours, but I have heard it can take days, weeks or even months."

Kennicutt also warns oil-eating microbes, called bioremediation, also might convert some of the oil's less harmful compounds into even more dangerous ones, creating greater environmental danger.

"Generally, the structure of the compounds created is not always known," Kennicutt says. "The ones created could be even more toxic."

Kennicutt says most people mis-

takenly believe microbes "eat" oil.

"In reality, microbes transform oil into other compounds, which microbe proponents say are more water soluble, or easier to break up," he says. "It is not likely, however, the more complex hydrocarbons — the more toxic ones — are broken up completely."

More investigation into the use of microbes is needed before any attempt to clean up the Persian Gulf spill, Kennicutt says.

He also says he is concerned the microbes have not been sufficiently tested in Texas.

Kennicutt says microbes suffer the same disadvantages as dispersants against a spill as large as the one washing ashore in Saudi Arabia.

"I am skeptical that the microbes would fare any better than more conventional methods against this spill," he says. "With so large a surface area, there is no easy way to apply the technique. Even if it were, it is doubtful it could reduce the spill this many days later."

The war in the gulf poses a great threat to clean-up efforts, Kennicutt says. Because the spill could not be immediately attacked, the spill might

See Microbes/Page 8

Man brings A&M statistics to life

By ISSELLE MCALLISTER
Of The Battalion Staff

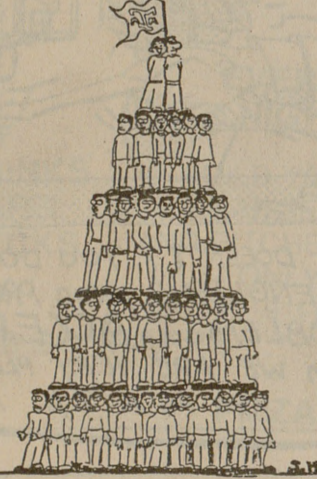
Dr. Fred Ruppel has his own way of putting boring, mundane statistics in a new light.

Ruppel, a Texas A&M assistant professor of international agricultural trade and finance, translates large numbers into tangible, understandable terms.

Taking unofficial spring enrollment figures of 38,376 students, Ruppel visualizes a 14.5-mile long line of people stretching from the Pavilion to the Brazos River. He says if just the 30,809 undergraduates joined hands, they would circle campus more than five times.

Ruppel says he has been comparing statistics to common experiences since he read "The Little Prince" by Antoine de Saint Exupéry.

The little prince in the book says the world's population would fit in a 20-square-mile area.



When he first read the statement, Ruppel says he thought the idea "preposterous," but later found it was true.

He says more than 3 billion people, about 60 percent of the world's population, could fit in an area from College Station to Navasota to Brenham to Caldwell.

Ruppel took his interest in converting statistics and applied it to A&M students.

A&M Registrar Donald Carter says of the 38,376 students, 30,809 are undergraduates, 6,924 are graduate students and 643 are professional students.

A total of 22,472 men and 15,904 women are enrolled this semester.

According to Ruppel's figures, however, those totals can be expressed the following way:

- If all men were stacked, they would make a

See Statistics/Page 7