

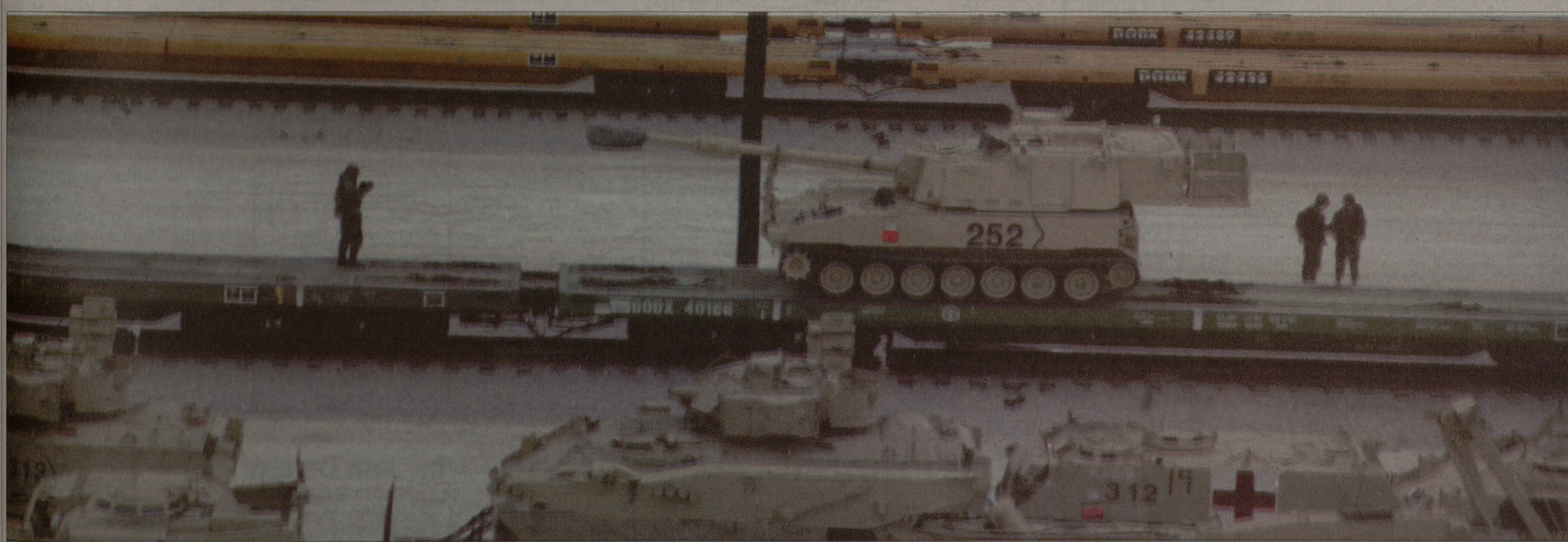
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ALISSA HOLLIMON • THE BATTALION

Texas soldiers prepare for war

By Nicole M. Jones
THE BATTALION

FORT HOOD, Texas — Living his life away from his family has taken some getting used to for Bill MacDonald, lieutenant colonel for the 4th Infantry of the U.S. Army, stationed at Fort Hood, Texas. Having not seen his

wife and two children since the Christmas holiday, MacDonald now faces the prospect of heading overseas to fight for his country.

Married since 1984, MacDonald is worried he will be among the next deployed, meaning he won't be able to read to his children or spend quality time with his wife back in Mississippi.

"Unfortunately, it doesn't look like I'm going to have the chance to see them before I go," he said.

Two Texas Army Reserve units were mobilized Friday and will report to Fort Hood today. The 121st Chaplain Team from Fort Sam Houston and the 288th Quartermaster Company from Victoria will send about 135 soldiers to Fort Hood.

These units are assigned to the 90th Regional Support Command, based in North Little Rock, Ark., and consist of more than 200 units in Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico and Oklahoma. For MacDonald, the wait for President George W. Bush's decision on whether to declare war with Iraq is hard because he does not know where he may be sent to battle.

Before deployment, soldiers must also have all personnel matters in order, including finance papers, medical requirements and insurance.

Top: A soldier directs a tank driver as they load their equipment on rail cars near Fort Hood that will be taken to surrounding ports to go overseas. Each piece of equipment must be tied down properly before departure. Upper right: Inspector Sgt. Kareem Castillo checks the fit of a gas mask on a member of the 1st Cavalry division last week. Lower right: Members of the 1st Cavalry stationed at Fort Hood inspect their gas masks for possible leaks last week as a commanding officer reads through operating instructions. Left: A soldier waits for the command to move out vehicles ready for shipment last week.



JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

"Two days ago, I got my smallpox shot," MacDonald said. "I got five pricks in my arm."

Since Jan. 10, various units of soldiers have been undergoing lane training at Fort Hood everyday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., said Sgt. Maj. Jose Melendez of the 1st Infantry.

This training teaches the soldiers skills to survive in a biological or chemical environment and teaches them first aid and how to identify and treat symptoms, Melendez said. Soldiers undergo common task testing during lane training.

Parts of lane training include interactive scenarios in which the soldiers'

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U.N. faces 'moment of truth,' Bush says

By Will Lester
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, W.Va. — President Bush said Sunday that Iraq has fooled the world for more than a decade about its banned weapons and the United Nations now faces "a moment of truth" in disarming Saddam Hussein.

"It is clear that not only is Saddam Hussein deceiving, it is clear he's not disarming. And so you'll see us over the next short period of time working with friends and allies and the United Nations to bring that body along," Bush told congressional Republicans at a policy conference.

He said the terrorist acts of Sept. 11

changed America and the world.

Before the attacks, Bush said, "We were confident that two oceans could protect us from harm. ... We are now a battle ground. We are vulnerable."

Bush said the U.S. public needs to understand that the country is expanding the fight against terrorism to Iraq and elsewhere.

Saddam "wants the world to think that hide-and-seek is a game that we should play. And it's over," Bush said.

The president spoke as chief U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix said in Baghdad that he saw a beginning of Iraq's understanding that it must seriously observe U.N. demands for disarmament. U.N. nuclear chief Mohamed ElBaradei said he expected the Security

Council to give the inspectors more time "as long as we are registering good progress."

Asked later about Blix's statement, White House spokesman Ari Fleischer noted that the president has said: "Given the fact that Saddam Hussein is not disarming, time is running out."

Blix and ElBaradei are to make their next report to the U.N. Security Council on Friday. That could be pivotal toward determining whether the United States should launch military action against Iraq and its allies.

In his speech, given while the inspectors held a televised news conference from Iraq, Bush said, "It's a moment of truth for the United Nations. The United Nations gets to decide shortly whether or

not it is going to be relevant in terms of keeping the peace, whether or not its words mean anything.

"But one thing is certain, for the sake of peace and for the sake of security of the United States and our friends and allies, we will disarm Saddam Hussein if he will not disarm himself."

Bush said "it is important for the country to realize that Saddam Hussein has fooled the world for 12 years, is used to fooling the world, is confident he can fool the world."

Earlier, Bush's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, dismissed movement toward compliance by Iraq as another attempt at "cheat and retreat."

"We have seen this game with Iraq many times before," she said.

Would-be terrorist deported

DALLAS (AP) — An immigration judge has ordered that a Jordanian graduate student who acknowledged he once considered becoming a suicide bomber if the United States invaded Iraq be deported.

"I was looking at America as my enemy. If someone would have approached me and asked me to do something against the country, I was willing to do it," Tahir Ibrahim Aletwei of the University of Texas at Arlington said at his deportation hearing Friday.

Aletwei, 30, said he has since changed his views and confessed to help U.S. authorities better guard against people like him.

However, U.S. Immigration Judge D. Anthony Rogers on Friday ordered Aletwei, who came to the U.S. in August 2001 as part of a Jordanian-sponsored student exchange program, deported within five days.

He was three months shy of earning a master's degree in software engineering.

"I abhor the thought processes that you acknowledge," the judge said. "The issue we have in this nation since 9-11 is we want to act on the side of caution, and it will be necessary to send you home. That's my final

See **Deportee** on page 2A

Robin Hood plan to be revamped

By Brad Bennett
THE BATTALION

A bill to repeal Texas' Robin Hood school funding system could save further job cuts at the College Station Independent School District while leaving a gaping hole in state funding for the majority of school districts statewide.

The CSISD released 46 people to compensate for \$2.3 million in budget cuts made for the 2003 fiscal year, said Dr. Steve Johnson, superintendent of CSISD.

Johnson said future cuts are expected if the funding system does not change.

"That \$2.3 million number is just for this year, it may go up to 3.3 and maybe 4.3," Johnson said.

Under the Robin Hood plan currently in place, money is taken from 150 of the state's 1,047 school districts, and redistributed, by the state, to the remaining 897 districts, said Dr. John Walch, assistant superin-

tendent for Business for Edgewood ISD, the leading plaintiff in the school finance court case filed against the state of Texas in 1984.

The bill, which was approved by the House Public Education Committee on Tuesday, would save CSISD the \$1.1 million that was taken by the state under the Robin Hood plan. The state redistributes that money to school districts less property-rich than College Station under the Robin Hood system. The proposed bill would end that process.

In their 1989 ruling Edgewood ISD v. Kirby, the Texas Supreme Court found that the then current system was inequitable and unconstitutional and required the state legislature to find a new school financing system.

The state legislature passed the Robin Hood plan in 1993, and the Texas Supreme Court approved the decision in 1995.

Any changes the legislature makes must be approved by the state supreme court and provide similar revenues for students at similar tax rates.

Sunset Bill

- Ends Robin Hood plan, offers no school funding alternative
- 86% of Texas school districts receive funding from the Robin Hood System
- College Station ISD would save \$1 million if Sunset Bill passes

TRAVIS SWENSON • THE BATTALION

SOURCE: KENT GRUENDORE, DR. JOHN WALCH, DR. STEVE JOHNSON

Johnson said that while an equitable funding system is needed to assist school districts with little funding, the solution is not to take money away from wealthier school districts.

The sunset bill, which would not take effect until

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