

THE BATTALION

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Texas A&M University

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Aggies beat No. 21 Missouri

By Blake Kimzey
THE BATTALION

If tradition held tough, the No. 21 Missouri Tigers would have flown back to Columbia with a 10-1 all-time record against the Aggies.

Instead, senior Bradley Jackson's winning floater with two seconds left in the game sent the Tigers packing with a 73-71 loss, and a 9-2 record against the Aggies in Big 12 competition.

With A&M reeling from its first back-to-back losses of the year, and Missouri splitting its past eight games, it was a must-win game for both teams. Each

half was defined by scoring spurts, as each team found ways to go on runs of eight points or more in each period.

Yet it was the Aggies who prevailed by closing the door on one of the most exhilarating games of the year in the Big 12.

The Aggies went into the locker room at halftime down 37-30, and needed a stern speech from Head Coach Melvin Watkins to get them back on track.

"I challenged them at the half as much as I ever have. My guys responded and we got the job done," Watkins said.

After leading a quiet revolution in the men's basketball program for the past five years,

Watkins is starting to reap the rewards of all that hard work. Wednesday's slim victory against a top 25 team is a good example of where the Aggies are headed.

The Aggies are now fighting for a position that will make them eligible for postseason play.

"This is a good win that keeps us on pace to accomplish some of the things we want to achieve," Watkins said. "But, we're looking at things one game at a time. If we do that, then the postseason possibilities will take care of themselves."

It was not all good news for Missouri Head Coach Quin Snyder. His team has dropped

five of its past nine games and are in a funk that could place its final push of the season in jeopardy.

"There were times when we played well, but at times I was questioning how hungry we are," Snyder said. "We have to be more urgent. You only get so many opportunities, and we lost one tonight."

Senior guard Bernard King, however, made sure he did not have a repeat performance from this weekend. After scorching the Tigers for 29 points, it was his presence on the floor that mattered the most. As the Aggies' leading scorer,



JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

Aggie guard **Bradley Jackson** goes for the fastbreak layup in the first half Wednesday night. **Jackson** put the Aggies over the top, defeating No. 21 ranked Missouri Tigers by scoring with two seconds left in the game.

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Friend of the Bard



JP BEATO III • THE BATTALION

Acting as William Shakespeare's best friend, **Alfred E. Wolfram** performed "The Shakespeare Man" in Rudder Theatre Wednesday night. **Wolfram** is participating in the MSC Literary Arts Committee's annual Shakespeare Festival, which concludes today with a performance by the 7-F Players at 7 p.m. in MSC 201.

Powell sweeps aside European concerns

NATO rejects U.S. war proposal

By David Espo
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Senior Bush administration officials spoke dismissively Wednesday of European calls for more and better weapons inspections to disarm Iraq at the same time the Pentagon took new steps toward war.

"More inspectors aren't the issue. The issue is lack of Iraqi compliance," Secretary of State Colin Powell told Congress. He said he intends to press French and German diplomats on whether or not their proposals amounted to "delaying for the sake of delaying in order to get Saddam Hussein off the hook and no disarmament."



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France, Germany and Belgium rejected a scaled-down U.S. proposal for NATO preparations in case of war in Iraq, prolonging the alliance's worst internal crisis since the end of the Cold War. Officials for the three countries say they don't want to approve any actions that could undercut efforts to settle the dispute peacefully.

A key portion of the dispute centers on a request from Turkey for assistance in the event of war against Iraq — protection that the United States has said Turkey will receive whether or not the alliance

approves of it.

President Bush provided a personal briefing for senior lawmakers on the looming showdown with Saddam, and later declared, "Because of the resolve of the United States, the world will be more peaceful and the world will be more free."

At the Pentagon, officials said the military dumped another half million leaflets over southern Iraq during the day as part of a psychological warfare campaign. One leaflet showed allied warplanes bombing military tanks outside a mosque, warning civilians to "avoid areas occupied by military personnel."

Additionally, officials said the Pentagon had activated 38,600 National Guardsmen and reservists in the past week, by far the largest such call-up since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

For all the signs of war, about 30 poets took turns reading antiwar verse in front of the White House during the day, part of what organizers said was a nationwide campaign to discourage hostilities.

In Iraq, United Nations chemical weapons experts set out to destroy their first batch of banned Iraqi armaments — 10 leftover artillery shells filled with burning, disabling mustard gas. Officials said it would take four or five days to eliminate the 155 mm mustard gas-filled

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NASA: mission control detected no damage

By Pete Yost
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — NASA's top official told Congress on Wednesday that mission controllers detected no unusual readings suggesting any insulating tile damage on the space shuttle Columbia in the days before the craft broke up over Texas.

During four hours of questioning about shuttle safety, NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe promised skeptical members of Congress that he would take steps to ensure the independence of the investigating commission which is trying to determine the cause of the Columbia tragedy.

"We had no indications during the (16-day) mission that would suggest a compromise to flight safety," O'Keefe told a joint hearing of Senate and House panels that oversee space programs. He said there were no abnormalities that would suggest a tile problem.

O'Keefe also said the agency is prepared to accept whatever blame the investigating commission headed by retired Navy Adm. Harold Gehman Jr. decides NASA deserves.

"There is nothing that is not on the

table" in terms of NASA accountability, said O'Keefe. "We will be guided by what the commission says" and "you have our assurance that this distinguished board will be able to act with genuine independence."

O'Keefe has fought to keep the Columbia investigation out of the hands of a presidential commission, such as the one that investigated the destruction of the space shuttle Challenger in 1986.

"We had no indication during the mission that would suggest a compromise to flight safety."

— Sean O'Keefe
NASA Administrator

chunk of foam insulation from the shuttle's external fuel tank as it broke away and appeared to strike Columbia's left wing.

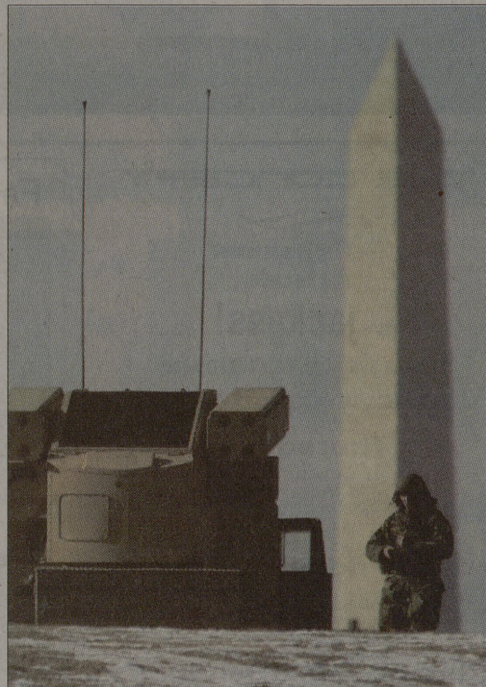
With the Gehman commission just starting its search for a cause, House Science Committee chairman Sherwood Boehlert, R-N.Y., said the 60-day deadline in the commission's charter for delivering a final report is "totally

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Nation braces for potential attack

By Ron Fournier
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Anti-aircraft missiles guarded Washington's skies and Capitol police carried gas masks Wednesday as the nation mobilized to



CHUCK KENNEDY • KRT CAMPUS

With the Washington Monument in the background, a soldier, accompanied by a Humvee with mounted anti-aircraft missiles, patrols Washington, D.C. on Wednesday, as the nation faced "orange" alert.

confront a potential terrorist attack.

Federal, state and local governments tightened security, anxious Americans stockpiled food and water, and police responded to scores of false alarms, including reports of suspicious vehicles that shut down commuter bridges in Washington and New York.

The nation remained under a Code Orange "high risk" of attack status for a sixth day, and no change was in sight. Counterterrorism officials said the level of threat information pointing to an imminent attack remained high, but steady.

"If given the choice, al-Qaeda terrorists will choose attacks that achieve multiple objectives, striking prominent landmarks, inflicting mass casualties, causing economic disruption and rallying support through shows of strength," CIA Director George Tenet told the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Tenet said he is worried that a new audio message attributed to terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden is a prelude to a strike.

"He's obviously raising the confidence of his people. He's obviously exhorting them to do more," Tenet said. "What he's said is often followed by an attack."

Meanwhile, U.S. counterterrorism officials were reviewing a transcript of a second purported audio message from bin Laden, but they could not verify it was an authentic message from the terror chief.

While the speaker mentions an apparent intention to die in the coming year and uses some rhetoric similar to bin Laden's, officials said they could not be certain of the speaker's identity without reviewing the actual recording. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity.

Fearing the worst, U.S. officials deployed Avenger anti-aircraft missiles and extra radar around Washington since President Bush's decision Friday to raise the alert status from yellow to orange, the second-highest level. The Air Force has stepped up its combat air patrols over the capital, defense officials said.

FBI personnel assigned to rapid response teams that would react to any terrorist attacks have been told to have a bag packed for three days' deployment and put on standby.

U.S. Capitol police were told to carry gas masks at all times. They are in a small, handheld black knapsack about six inches long. Every officer has them, including those in plainclothes who provide security for leaders and in the congressional chambers.

The weekly FBI bulletin circulated to 17,000 law enforcement agencies

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THE BATTALION
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prayer

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