

THE BATTALION

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U.S. closes in on Baghdad, more troops killed

By David Espo
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In a day of advances and losses, U.S. forces fought their way to within sight of Baghdad's skyline Wednesday, but Iraqis shot down an American helicopter and warplane. At least seven soldiers were killed, the Pentagon said.

U.S. officials claimed the destruction of a pair of menacing Republican Guard divisions and said other Guard units were moved to the south in an apparent effort to shore up Iraqi defenses.

Bombs shook the capital as Army and Marine armored columns took separate, converging paths toward the city from the south. "The dagger is clearly pointed" at the heart of Saddam Hussein's regime, said Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks.

The rapid advances brought thousands of troops within the so-called red zone — an imaginary line on the map near the capital where Iraqi use of weapons of mass destruction is most feared. Troops in some lead Army units donned chemical protection suits, and Marine helicopter pilots were ordered to be prepared to do so.

An Army Black Hawk helicopter was downed by small-arms fire near Karbala, site of fierce fighting between the Army's 3rd Infantry Division and Iraqi troops, including Republican Guard forces. Seven soldiers were killed and four were wounded and rescued, officials said.

Iraq shot down a one-seat Navy F/A-18 Hornet with a surface-to-air missile Wednesday, military officials said. There was no immediate word on the fate of the pilot. It was the first American fighter jet shot down during the war.

The military campaign unfolded as Pfc. Jessica Lynch, a 19-year-old

prisoner of war freed in a daring nighttime rescue, was flown to Germany for medical treatment.

But the joy over her freedom was tempered by word that the special forces who rescued her also found 11 bodies.

The U.S. Central Command, which is overseeing the war, said it was investigating reports that warplanes had bombed a Red Crescent maternity hospital in Baghdad.

Despite the gains on the battlefield, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and others cautioned that some of the toughest fighting of the military campaign may lie ahead.

STUDENT BODY ELECTIONS 2003

STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT RUNOFF RESULTS

WINNER Matt Josefy 4,770 votes
Stoney Burke 3,567 votes

JUNIOR YELL RUNOFF RESULTS

Ryan Bishop 5,208 votes
Paul Terrell 4,811 votes

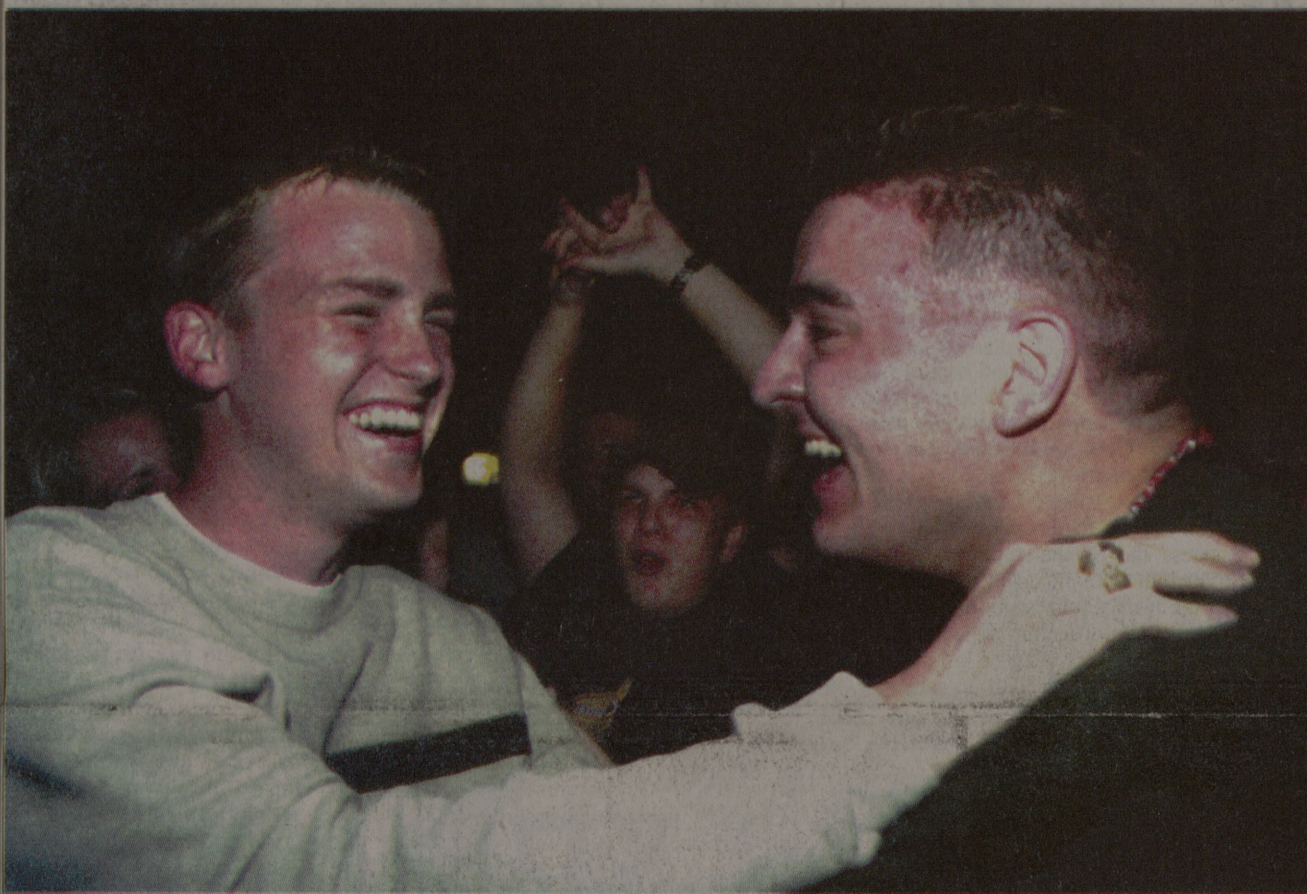
RHA PRESIDENT RUNOFF RESULTS

Chris Mahaffey 1,065 votes

FOR COMPLETE ELECTION RESULTS VISIT: WWW.THEBATT.COM

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: ELECTION COMMISSION

All smiles



ALISSA HOLLIMON • THE BATTALION

Newly-elected Student Body President **Matt Josefy** celebrates with supporters after hearing the results of the runoff elections early Friday morning. **Josefy** won with 57 percent of the votes over fellow candidate Stoney Burke.

WHO searches for origin of disease

By Audra Ang
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GUANGZHOU, China — A team of international scientists landed Thursday in this city just west of Hong Kong and set to work hunting clues to the origins of a fatal flu-like illness as the worldwide death toll rose.

Officials in Guangdong province on China's southern coast gave the World Health Organization team figures indicating that fewer people in the hard-hit region are getting sick from severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS, said Chris Powell, a spokesman for the team.

The investigators, who expect to stay in the provincial capital of Guangzhou until Tuesday, planned to talk to doctors and visit hospitals and the nearby town where the first case of SARS was reported in November.

"This is a virological mystery that needs to be solved," Powell said. "There are still new cases — which is very sad — but the number of cases from what we've seen is going down."

The investigators were closed all afternoon with provincial health officials, who provided

ed a battery of data, including "very detailed information" about people in Guangdong who got SARS, how they got sick and what kind of treatment they received, Powell said.

The Chinese moves toward openness come after foreign criticism of the communist government's reluctance to release information about SARS.

The illness has killed at least 80 people in Asia and Canada — 46 of them in mainland China — and sickened at least 2,200 in more than a dozen nations as infected travelers board planes and reach other continents in hours.

In the United States, there were 100 suspected cases in 28 states. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said they now have a test to better diagnose the disease.

Health authorities in Toronto said Thursday they believed a seventh person had died from SARS, but they had not confirmed the cause of death. A cancer research conference expected to draw 15,000 to Canada's largest city was canceled for fear oncologists might spread SARS to their already weakened cancer patients.

Gay students strive for tolerance

By Rob Phillips
THE BATTALION

When Noel Freeman voluntarily left the Corps of Cadets in October 2000 after admitting he was gay, he not only walked away from his friends, he lost the one thing that shaped his college identity.

"The Corps of Cadets is the only reason I came to Texas A&M University," said Freeman, who left after his announcement caused an uproar within part of his outfit. Without the Corps there was no reason for me to be at A&M."

In December 2000, Freeman, a senior political science major, became the first student in A&M history to be discharged from the Air Force ROTC under the U.S. military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, which bans homosexuals from serving.

"The financial impact for losing an ROTC scholarship is substantial," he said.

Freeman said he returned to the Corps in August 2001 because he disliked being a non-reg and missed being part of one of A&M's richest traditions. He said on the whole the Corps has been supportive and credits Lt. Gen. John Van Alstyne for his success in the Corps.

"They really care about what people have to offer, regardless of their background or sexual orientation," he said.

Freeman, who wants to create a scholarship for other discharged gay and lesbian cadets, is part of the gay student community striving to increase the awareness and tolerance of homosexuals at A&M. This week marks Gay Awareness Week at A&M, an effort to educate students about homosexuality and offer support for gay and lesbian students.

Chelsey Jones, president of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Aggies, said progress is slowly being made to increase tolerance of gays and lesbians at A&M.

"People are a lot more willing to listen, not necessarily accepting because of their moral stance or religion or whatnot, but to be educated," said Jones, a junior industrial engineering major. "Just the fact that they are listening is a step in the right direction."

Dr. Carol Binzer, interim coordinator of Gender Issues Education Services, said student protests of Gay Awareness Week have been "very quiet" to her knowledge.

A pro-heterosexuality rally took place Thursday in the free speech area at the Academic Plaza, but there have been no reports of physical confrontation this week, Binzer said.

See **Tolerance** on page 2

Albright plans to address foreign diplomacy tonight

By Melissa Sullivan
THE BATTALION

Against a backdrop of war and turmoil in the Middle East, former Secretary of State Madeline Albright will address foreign diplomacy as part of the Memorial Student Center Wiley Lecture Series tonight at 8 p.m. in Rudder Auditorium.

Albright is the first female secretary of state and was the highest-ranking female in the U.S. government.

"We have been working to get her here for a long time and the Middle East is her specialty," said Steven Pena, direc-

tor of marketing for Wiley Lecture Series. "We are glad she could come speak at this point in time."

In the panel discussion, "Peace Process in the Middle East," moderated by Charles Hermann from the Bush School, Albright will be joined by former U.S. ambassador to Israel and Syria, Edward P. Djerejian.

In addition to his knowledge of the Middle East, Djerejian is an expert in Soviet and Russian affairs and is one of the founding directors of the James Baker Institute of Public Policy.

The panel will accept questions from the audience, but they must be written and submitted prior to entering the auditorium, Pena said.

Tickets are still available, priced at \$5 and \$7 for students and \$10 and \$12 for non-students.



ALBRIGHT

Student Senate returns GPR resolution

Modified GPR Calculation Resolution - Proposed bill

Students could choose not to apply grade of F or D toward overall GPR up to three times	
Students could retake the class they received an F in and only new grade would count	A
Modification would be noted on student's transcript	B
Bill approved by Faculty Senate Mar. 17; currently in Student Senate Committee	C

TRAVIS SWENSON • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: STUDENT SENATE

By Brad Bennett
THE BATTALION

The Student Senate returned a resolution to committee Wednesday night that could boost future students' grade-point ratios.

A second vote resurrected the resolution after it was voted down earlier in the night.

The Modified GPR Calculation Resolution would allow students to omit a grade of F or D from their overall GPR, although a note would be made on transcripts signifying the modification. The resolution would also allow students to retake

a class they had failed and and replace the failing grade with the new grade.

All changes would need to be made within 15 days of the next semester to not include a grade.

Matthew Wilkins, a sophomore philosophy major, said the plan would lead to grade inflation, which is already a serious problem at Texas A&M.

"The honors program is considering raising its GPR requirements because all the honors classes are full," Wilkins said. "This is the most important academic issue we have considered in this chamber this year."

Kevin Capps, a junior history major, said he is

against the resolution because it will not motivate people to study hard.

"You're telling people it's OK to fail," he said.

Grade inflation is a valid concern, but one to be dealt with by a later committee, said Cassandra Patterson, a junior history major and co-author of the resolution.

"If they (administration) don't see a lot of student support, I don't see them going ahead with it," she said.

The Faculty Senate approved a similar resolution

See **Student** on page 2