

# THE BATTALION

109 Years Serving Texas A&M University

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## Ground broken on 1999 Bonfire Memorial

By Jodi Rogers  
THE BATTALION

More than 150 friends and family members of the fallen and injured Aggies of the 1999 Aggie Bonfire Collapse attended a groundbreaking ceremony at the Bonfire Memorial site Saturday.

A representative from each of the fallen Aggies' families broke ground at the location on which centerpole once stood alongside Texas A&M President Robert M. Gates and Student Body President Matt Josefy.

A family representative from each of the 12 victims' families broke ground again in front of each victim's memorial marker and carried the earth back to centerpole.

Josefy said the memorial would be as much for those who died as well as for the people who remember them in the past, present and future.

"The Bonfire Memorial will be a permanent icon to them, to ourselves and to the world of gratitude we have for the way they impacted our lives," he said.

Construction on the Bonfire Memorial is scheduled to start early this fall, with the dedication ceremony expected to take place on Nov. 18, 2004, according to the University's Web site.

Gates said the memorial will serve as a reminder to all who visit it that they are not alone.

"I pray that this polo field becomes a place where those who visit may find

peace of mind, comfort for troubled spirits and even some measure of joy in the knowledge of what those memorialized here contributed to others in their families, in their communities and on this campus during their lives," he said.

Nancy Braus, mother of Dominic Braus who was injured in the collapse, said the groundbreaking ceremony was emotional for her, but that she was glad the memorial was underway.

"We all wanted the memorial to be here because this is where they shed their last blood," she said. "And they shed it as supporting and loving, being together and working together."

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### BONFIRE MEMORIAL

#### Groundbreaking Ceremony



- A representative from each of the 12 victim's families helped break ground

- Construction will begin in the fall

- Dedication ceremony will be held Nov. 18, 2004

SOURCE: BONFIRE MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION

### Boy soldier



RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION

Two-year-old **Holden Howard** of College Station puts Saturday. The birthday party included a bubble on a toy army helmet at his brother's birthday party bounce, birthday cake and presents.

## Hutchison gets \$24 million for A&M homeland security

By Brandi Foster  
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M was awarded \$24 million last week for homeland security work following a request from Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison.

"Sen. Hutchison has been very active in securing funds for homeland security," said Sandra Dugan, Hutchison's spokeswoman. "It is relevant, necessary and it is for the protection of our country."

Dugan said the first \$4 million will come from a \$368 billion spending package for the Department of Defense for fiscal year 2004. Among the other provisions are a 4 percent military pay raise, an increase in troops' housing allowances and additional funding for family separation and imminent danger pay.

The funds will be used to provide emergency response training at A&M for military and civilian personnel. The training will focus on responding to a terrorist attack with a weapon of mass destruction.

The additional \$20 million will come from the Department of Homeland Security spending bill. These funds will help finance the National Emergency Response and Rescue Training Center, part of the Texas Engineering Extension Service.

"NERRTC receives no general revenue from the state for operations," said Bill May, NERRTC director. "We operate on grants from the Department of Homeland Security. This funding will be used to continue delivery nationally of our weapons of mass

### Money for terrorism research

A&M awarded \$24 million for homeland security work

First \$4 million to come from a \$368 billion spending package for the Department of Defense

Additional \$20 million will come from the Department of Homeland Security spending bill

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION  
SOURCE: OFFICE OF SEN. HUTCHISON

destruction terrorism training courses." NERRTC is a leading member of the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium of top homeland security training centers all across the country.

According to its Web site, NERRTC provides training at federal, state and local levels to prepare officials for terrorist attacks and help assess the threat of a terrorist attack in a specific area.

"Since 1999, we have trained over 55,000 emergency responders in over 3,400 jurisdictions in all states and territories,"

See **Hutchison** on page 2

## Student dies after car wreck

By Justin Smith  
THE BATTALION

Incoming freshman Leslie Ann Snell of College Station died July 15 after suffering head injuries as a result of a car accident.

Snell's Acura Integra was broadsided by a Toyota Land Cruiser while turning out of a parking lot on Southwest Parkway July 14. The driver of the Land Cruiser was not injured.

"She was very strong with the Aggie Spirit," said Marilyn Snell, Leslie's mother and a Texas A&M

employee at the Veterinary School. "She had been looking forward to going to A&M for years. She had even been to Bonfire with her sister."

Leslie chose to attend A&M following in her parents' and sister's footsteps, Marilyn said.

Her father, Jim, graduated in 1973, and her sisters, Melissa and Courtney, graduated in 1995 and 2001 respectively, with several aunts, uncles and in-laws also attending.

Jim, who works at A&M as the director of technical

services and a senior lecturer of vet anatomy and public health, said Leslie did not apply to any other school.

Melissa said Leslie was really looking forward to taking part in every aspect of campus life and that she would have been a great Aggie.

Leslie made an impact on everyone she met, Marilyn said, which is evident in the fact that close to 200 of her fellow students from A&M Consolidated High School came to the hospital to show

See **Death** on page 2

## Lynch heads to West Virginia home

By Gavin McCormick  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ELIZABETH, W.Va. — Jessica Lynch has never seen her home county look quite like this: weed-decked, bow-strewn and virtually weedless.

Then again, Wirt County has never planned a celebration quite like Tuesday's homecoming of Lynch, the 20-year-old Army private who was taken prisoner in Iraq in March, and whose survival and recovery by U.S. forces made her a hero.

Knowing that hundreds of journalists will be descending on this county seat of about 1,000 for Lynch's first public comments about her ordeal, the locals have been painting, pruning and preening for weeks.

"Every weed in every crack is blown to dirt," said Debbie Hennen,

the county assessor. "We don't want people to see weeds. We want them to say, 'Gosh, that is such a friendly town. That's a place I'd like to live.'"

Many of the flags and yellow ribbons that sprouted after Lynch's Fort Bliss, Texas, maintenance convoy drove into an ambush March 23 have been replaced with new versions, especially along the five miles Lynch's motorcade will drive on her journey's final leg from Elizabeth to her home town of Palestine.

Lynch — who is still recuperating from multiple broken bones and other injuries — and family members will be flown to Elizabeth by helicopter from Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. Her public statement will be



LYNCH

brief, and she will not take questions from reporters, family spokesman Randy Coleman has said.

Wayne Wright, commander of the local Veterans of Foreign Wars post, drove across the state line to Marietta, Ohio, to buy the dozens of flagpoles now attached to utility poles along the motorcade route.

"We want to let her know that we care," Wright said.

On a break Sunday from retarring the parking lot of Dick's Market, a shirtless Todd Somerville said he had paving jobs lined up across the county over the next two days.

"Oh, yeah, lots of people want to spruce up their places for Jessi," he said.

Beneath the ribbons and paint, Lynch will find life essentially unchanged in this county of fewer

See **Lynch** on page 2

## U.S. general predicts growing anti-American violence in Iraq

By Robert Burns  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Resistance to U.S. forces in Iraq will grow in coming months as progress is made in creating a new government to replace the dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussein, the top commander of American and international troops in Iraq predicted Sunday.

Gen. John Abizaid, the commander of Central Command, said he is establishing an Iraqi "civil defense force," or armed militia, to help U.S. forces combat the violence and sabotage that Abizaid and others believe is being spearheaded by remnants of Saddam's regime.

Speaking with a small group of reporters

over lunch at a Baghdad hotel, Abizaid said that the establishment earlier this month of a Governing Council of Iraqi political leaders was a good first step that improves the outlook for getting the country back on its feet.

"But in the short run it creates great anxiety among our enemies, and they'll increase the level of resistance," Abizaid said. "So I'm enormously optimistic about our opportunity for success, as long as we don't lose our nerve."

The ambush death of two soldiers Sunday in northern Iraq brought the number of U.S. troops killed in action since the March 20 start of war to 151 — including 36 since May 1, when President George W. Bush

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THE BATTALION  
By R. DeLuna  
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