

THE BATTALION

A Texas A&M Tradition Since 1893

Volume 110 • Issue 42 • 12 pages

www.thebattalion.net

Monday, October 27, 2003

Franks defends Iraqi war

By Sarah Szuminski
THE BATTALION

Recently retired Army General Tommy Franks said Americans should be proud of the United States' efforts to end Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq when he spoke to a packed Rudder Auditorium at Texas A&M Friday.

Franks, who commanded U.S. troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, joined New York Times foreign correspondent and Pulitzer Prize winner John Burns and former President George Bush to discuss experiences in Iraq as part of a leadership forum.

The former Midland resident, who retired two months ago, spoke to

approximately 2,500 attendees about the U.S.-led campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq and the ongoing war on terrorism.

On Sept. 11, 2001, Franks said, Americans realized their vulnerability.

"Then all of a sudden, I remember how I felt on the 12th," Franks said. "(Our country has) the attitude of a superpower that refuses to cave in to terrorists."

Franks said citizens of Afghanistan have been given the chance to become a stable society as a result of U.S. intervention.

"All of us have a right to be proud of the young men and women in uniform and our country who have given liberty to Afghanistan," he said.

The decision to declare war, Franks

said, was a long process of finding the right approach and plan.

"Those who believe that we are inclined in this country and this government to flap our arms and make snap judgments to carry our country into war ... are terribly wrong," he said.

Burns, who was previously stationed in Iraq, related his knowledge of the country.

"Unless you've been there — unless you've experienced it — it would be hard to understand how brutally repressive that regime is," Burns said. "This is a people utterly traumatized."

What happened on April 9 when

See Franks on page 2



RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION

Former President George Bush, center, hosts a leadership forum in Rudder Auditorium Friday. Recently retired Army General Tommy Franks (right) and New York Times foreign correspondent John Burns (left) joined Bush to discuss experiences in Iraq.

Student information released via e-mail

By Sarah Walch
THE BATTALION

A database of all 1,300 Texas A&M biology major students' personal information, including their Social Security numbers, was accidentally attached to an Oct. 22 e-mail that was sent to each of the 1,300 majors.

An adviser in the Undergraduate Advising Office for the biology department mistakenly attached the database — which included students' names, grade point ratios, ethnicities, e-mail addresses and other personal information — instead of the departmental monthly newsletter to the e-mail intended for all biology majors.

Students expressed concern, surprise and anger over the security breach.

Rene Farrell, a freshman biology major, said she was unaware that the attachment contained her personal information.

"If they sent out our Social Security number and our GPR, that's bad. That really makes me mad. They need to be more careful," she said. "That defeats the whole purpose of having codes, if you're just going to send it out to everybody."

Senior biology major Sabrina Caballero said she was also unaware that the attachment

included the private information and hoped no one would use the information inappropriately.

"I'm going to delete the e-mail right now," she said.

Christopher Farmer, a senior biology major, said the release of the document was a serious security breach.

"They won't let profs post grades using our Social Security number, and now they send it out in an open document," he said.

Approximately 45 minutes after the first e-mail had been sent, another e-mail was sent by the department asking students to delete the previous message.

Vincent Cassone, head of the biology department, said the advising office was testing the new e-mail system that reaches all the students in an effort to improve department-wide communications when the error occurred.

After the mistake was realized, a letter was sent to students informing them of the problem, he said. Later, Cassone contacted Computing and Information Services and asked it to delete the message.

"As soon as I found out about (the e-mail) I called CIS, and they told me they were able to intercept some but not all of them," he said.

See E-mail on page 2

Surf's up



RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION

Junior environmental studies major Jeremy Edge and freshman communications major Matt Foucheaux paddle through Rudder Fountain Friday afternoon on their surf boards. They

are two of the six founders of the TAMU Surf Club, and were meeting the rest of the founders at Rudder Fountain for a promotions picture.

Wildfires merge in southern California

By Chelsea J. Carter
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. — Wildfires that have burned for days merged into walls of flame stretching across miles in parts of Southern California on Sunday, leaving 14 people dead, burning 650 homes and frustrating overmatched firefighters who worked relentlessly against fierce winds.

Major fires had burned 264,000 acres by Sunday night.

The state's largest fire, in eastern San Diego County, caused at least 11 deaths, including two who died inside their car as they apparently tried to escape the flames, San Diego Sheriff Bill Kolender said.

One person was found dead in a trailer,

one in a motor home and four in vehicles, county sheriff's spokeswoman Susan Knauss said. Three were killed while trying to escape on foot and two were dead on arrival at local hospitals.

"We were literally running through fire," said Lisza Pontes, 43, who escaped the fire with her family after the roar of flames woke them at 3:45 a.m. As they drove off, they saw a neighbor's mobile home explode.

"I was grabbing wet towels. Fire was at our feet," Pontes said. "It was blazing over our heads and burning everywhere."

The 100,000-acre fire started Saturday near the mountain town of Julian when a lost hunter set off a signal fire, authorities said. The hunter was detained and may face charges.

Another fire near San Diego that started Sunday killed one man and destroyed 36 homes while burning through about 3,000 acres, Lora Lowes of the California Department of Forestry said. It also prompted evacuations in northeastern Escondido.

In a San Diego neighborhood on the western flank of the fire, at least 150 homes were either destroyed or damaged, San Diego police said.

Fire also forced the evacuation of a Federal Aviation Administration control center in San Diego, disrupting air travel across the nation. Some airlines canceled flights into the region.

The flames drew much of their strength

Wildfires rage in Southern California

Fierce Santa Ana winds propelled flames across the southern region of California causing fires to burn out of control. Towns are being evacuated and thousands of homes are threatened by fires.

Burning acreage

- 1 Simi Valley — 47,000 acres and damaged 14 homes
- 2 Crestline — Almost 50,000 people evacuated
- 3 Bernardino — 350 homes have burned in two days in suburbs
- 4 Claremont — 50 homes burned near the canyon as people evacuated
- 5 Ramona — Seven homes have been destroyed. Two people were found dead in a car believed to have been trying to escape San Diego fire.



SOURCE: Associated Press

AP

See Wildfires on page 2

A&M grad student killed

A Texas A&M graduate student was killed Saturday when the car he was in collided with a Chevrolet Camaro attempting to dodge a Chevrolet Blazer leaving a driveway between Turkey Creek and F&B roads on Harvey Mitchell Parkway South.

28-year-old Cheng-Hsien Chiang, a graduate civil engineering student, died during surgery at the Scott and White hospital in Temple. Chiang was travelling in a Mercury with four other Aggies when the accident occurred.

The Camaro was driven by Edward Franklin Sullivan IV, a 16-year-old junior at St. Joseph Catholic School who was also killed in the wreck, the Bryan-College Station Eagle reported. The driver's side of Sullivan's auto-

mobile was hit by the Mercury as he attempted to avoid the Blazer.

The graduate students were sent to College Station Medical Center and two were airlifted to Scott & White hospital in Temple. College Station police said Chiang died during surgery while the other student remained in critical condition. Another student, sent to St. Joseph Regional Health Center in Bryan, was listed in critical condition.

The other two students, who remained at College Station Medical Center, were in serious condition.

College Station Police Department officials say they have begun an investigation of the accident. Four of the five were international students.

Bombing kills U.S. colonel

A barrage of rockets struck the Al Rasheed Hotel in Baghdad killing an American colonel and wounding 15. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz was staying in the hotel where U.S. officials live. He escaped unhurt.



SOURCE: Associated Press

AP

Insurgent rockets drive Americans from main hotel in Baghdad

By Charles J. Hanley
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — A "science project" of a rocket launcher forced the U.S. occupation authority to retreat from its main hotel Sunday, after a barrage by the Iraqi resistance that killed an American colonel, wounded 18 other people and sent scores of U.S. officials scurrying for safety, including the visiting deputy defense secretary.

Paul Wolfowitz, the shaken-looking but unhurt Pentagon deputy, said the strike against the Al Rasheed Hotel, from nearly point-blank range, "will not deter us from

completing our mission" in Iraq.

But the bold blow at the heart of the U.S. presence here clearly rattled U.S. confidence that it is defeating Iraq's shadowy insurgents. "We'll have to get the security situation under control," Secretary of State Colin Powell told NBC's "Meet the Press." He said the Bush administration knew postwar security would be a challenge, but "we didn't expect it would be quite this intense this long."

The assault was likely planned over at least the past two months, a top U.S. commander said, as the insurgents put together

See Rockets on page 2