

THE BATTALION

A Texas A&M Tradition Since 1893

Volume 110 • Issue 67 • 8 pages

www.thebattalion.net

Wednesday, December 3, 2003

Aggie soldiers serve in Iraq

By Rhiannon Meyers
THE BATTALION

As Lt. Ryan Murata, Class of 1995 and assistant operations officer for a U.S. Marine infantry battalion, advanced into Baghdad, he and an old friend shot each other the "gig 'em" sign going into their attack.

"It seems that every battalion has an Aggie in it somewhere," said Capt. Scott Dellinger, Class of 1997 and commander for the 1st Armored Division of the U.S. Army Bravo Battery.

Dellinger said there is an informal Aggie network in Iraq.

Murata said he was happy to see Aggies in Iraq because he knew they had values instilled in them at Texas A&M giving them a special sense of loyalty to each other and their country.

Murata said he was part of the first group of troops to march on Baghdad. "Our original feelings going into Baghdad was that we had civilians who were a threat like everyone else," Murata said. "But when we started rolling down Baghdad, it was like a parade. People were throwing flowers and cheering."

The celebrations came to a halt as the platoon reached Baghdad University. In one of the first publicly broadcast conflicts of the war, Iraqis opened fire on Murata's platoon.

"It was strange," Murata said. "Blocks away people were waving and blowing kisses, and a couple of blocks down people are shooting at us."

Murata's battalion spent 10 days in Baghdad, before moving to Southern Iraq to relieve the 101st Airborne. There they helped rebuild the city of Najaf by reopening schools, universities, hospitals

and mosques. They acted as a police force and tracked down high-ranking Baath party members and terrorists.

Cpl. Jake Brenner, a junior kinesiology major and crew chief on an amphibious assault vehicle in the 1st Marine Division, dropped all plans for a normal spring semester at A&M when he was called to active duty in early January. Brenner spent five weeks in Kuwait before advancing on Baghdad, where he initially encountered Iraqi resistance.

"The vehicle behind me got hit with an RPG (rocket-propelled grenade)," Brenner said. "It scared everybody. No one knew what was happening."

When the fighting died down, Brenner said he saw that everything he had been told about Saddam Hussein's regime was true.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF: SCOTT DELLINGER

Capt. Scott M. Dellinger, third from left, with Bravo Battery, First Battalion, 4th Air Defense Artillery Regiment in Iraq. The 4th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, assigned to the 1st Armored Division, consists of approximately 110 soldiers, 10 Bradley Stinger fighting vehicles and dozens of Humvees. It is a small part of the 50,000 soldier division.

Gates forum to address admissions policies

By Eric Ambroso
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M President Robert M. Gates will hold an open forum today to discuss changes in admissions requirements and to announce the creation of the Tuition Policy Advisory Committee.

The U.S. Supreme Court decided in June that race can be considered in a university's admission policies, and Big 12 schools, such as the University of Texas, have already looked at implementing affirmative action policies in their admissions.

The Supreme Court upheld a previous ruling by the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals that the University of Michigan Law School's admissions policy is constitutional.

The school had been using race as a factor in admissions. The court held that the law school's goal of admitting a "critical mass of under represented minority students," does not necessarily turn the program's admissions process into a quota system. However, the court disagreed with Michigan's undergraduate system of automatically distributing points to students from minority groups in the admissions process.

In response to the ruling, Gates appointed a task force in August, headed by Karan Watson, dean of faculties and associate provost, to research A&M's admissions policies.

The task force completed its work and submitted its recommendations to Gates. He reviewed the recommendations and will announce a final decision about whether the University will change its admissions policies at the forum.

"I'm going to talk about changes in admissions requirements and also some new outreach programs," Gates said.

Unlike A&M, UT proposed alterations

OPEN FORUM ON ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS



WHO:

Held by President Robert M. Gates

WHEN:

Wednesday, Dec. 3
5 p.m. - 6 p.m.

WHERE:

Koldus 111

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: AGGIE DAILY

to admissions policies this semester. The implementation of any changes made to the A&M's admissions policies will be delayed for at least a year.

According to the Texas Education Code, a university must publish its admissions requirements at least one year prior to the date applicants for admission are considered using the new guidelines.

The statute requires delaying implementation of any new admissions policies until the Fall 2005.

Gates will announce which changes

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Army ROTC instructors awarded Bronze Stars

By Lauren Smith
THE BATTALION

When Capt. Patrick Seiber received the Bronze Star from former President George Bush at the Bush Presidential Conference Center Monday, it was not the first meeting for the two. When Seiber was 8 years old and having a hard time buckling his belt buckle in a Lubbock airport restroom, Bush came to his rescue.

"He said that his son had one like it when he was about my age," Seiber said. "I told my parents to vote for him since he had helped me."

Seiber, along with fellow Texas A&M Army ROTC instructor Capt. Sidney Crews, had Bronze Star medals pinned on their chests by Bush Monday. The men were honored for their recent achievements in combat in Iraq.

Seiber earned his medal for service with the 1st Battalion, 63rd Armored Regiment during combat operations in northern Iraq.

Seiber said he helped amass and

employ armored forces, tanks and any armored vehicle support U.S. forces needed.

Seiber, Class of 1993 and a recruiting operations officer, was hired by A&M earlier this year. He is also the military adviser for the Ross Volunteers and Corps of Cadets Company L-1.

When Seiber found out that he would be going into the war, he had 24 hours in Germany to say goodbye to his wife and 5-year-old daughter.

"It was the night of her fifth birthday, and I had to tell her I was going to war and may not come back," Seiber said. "It was the hardest thing I have ever had to do."

Crews, who came to A&M in June, is currently teaching military sciences.

B.G. "Jug" Burkett of Dallas also received the Distinguished Civilian Service Award at Monday's ceremonies.

Burkett is the author of "Stolen Valor," an effort to change perspectives on Vietnam veterans.

Bush praised Burkett at the ceremony for "almost single-handedly setting the record straight on America's Vietnam veterans."

Carol of the bells



SHARON AESCHBACH • THE BATTALION

Mike Ringham, a member of the Christ United Methodist Canticle Bells group, performs Christmas songs at the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum as part of the 5th annual celebration, "Holidays in the Rotunda." The program will

run Dec. 4, 9 and 11 from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 6. Various local music and dance groups will perform, arts and crafts are provided for children and free punch and cookies are provided to all.

Parsons trial expected to end Thursday

By Jacquelyn Spruce
THE BATTALION

Attorney Ronald Hole, who represents members of the Texas A&M Parsons Mounted Cavalry, said cavalry members were not permitted adequate access to binders containing a description of evidence against them on Tuesday as the group's civil suit against Texas A&M continued.

However, Dean of Student Life Dave Parrot testified that the students did have opportunities to view the evidence binders in the Department of Student Life, but were not permitted to take the binders from the office.

"The law requires us to give them access and that's what we do," he

said. "We simply don't want the evidence to leave the office. We're always concerned about retaliation and misuse of evidence."

University President Robert M. Gates said he did not have enough information to justify the rule but that he would examine the complaints leveled against the rule.

Twenty-three members of Parsons are suing the University, seeking a permanent injunction that would keep them from being punished for underage drinking, hazing and physical abuse.

Hole asked Parrot why he chose Laura Sosh-Lightsy, the coordinator for student judicial services in Student Life, to be a member of this investigation.

"You knew she had never done any investigation as far as the Corps of Cadets," Hole said.

Parrot said he thought Sosh-Lightsy was a good investigator, and although she had not done specific investigating for the Corps, she was the best person to work on the case.

"She is someone who has a great deal of interaction with the Corps," he said. "She's very knowledgeable so I thought she was very well qualified for the investigation."

Bryan Higgins, one of the 23 students suing the University, said he was told he had the right to remain silent, but thought it would be used against him. He said the way his right

See Parsons on page 2

Career services adviser: Finding a job is a job

How is the job market waiting for December graduates?

Leigh Turner, executive director of the Career Center, gives these insights:

• The job market is on the upswing.

• Top recruited majors for on-campus interviews this semester have been in business and technical disciplines.

• Students should begin looking for employment at least two semesters in advance.



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SOURCE: CAREER CENTER

By Eric Ambroso
THE BATTALION

Manuel Nasserfar will graduate in two weeks with a degree in communications and a minor in business, but he has not been able to find a job. He is one of many seniors graduating in December having problems finding work in the professional world.

"The job market has not been good to me, and salaries are lower than I expected," Nasserfar said. "I wanted to go into real estate, but I will probably end up waiting tables and substitute teaching in Austin."

But the job market is on the upswing, said Leigh Turner, executive director of the Texas A&M Career Center. Many

firms that have not recruited at A&M in the past two years are back on campus and more students are canceling interviews because they have already accepted a job offer, Turner said.

Employers also report that they are actively hiring instead of just maintaining visibility on campus, Turner said. The top recruited majors for on-campus interviews this semester have been in business and technical disciplines. However, many employers are looking at all majors for their positions and there are some majors who are marketable but have few on-campus opportunities because employers connect with them in different ways.

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