

Attack on U.S. forces kills one soldier and wounds 14

By Christopher Torchia
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Three suicide bombers in a furniture truck blew themselves up at the gates of a U.S. Army base Thursday, killing one soldier and wounding 14. It was the third suicide attack on American troops in Iraq this week.

Three wounded soldiers were evacuated from the headquarters of the 82nd Airborne Division west of Baghdad to a combat hospital and the other 11 wounded were treated and returned to duty, the U.S. military reported.

There were no U.S. fatalities in the previous two suicide attacks this week, indicating defenses erected at American facilities were paying off.

Early Friday, three loud explosions boomed in the "Green Zone," the compound housing the headquarters of the U.S.-led coalition, in central Baghdad.

A coalition spokesman said two projectiles hit "in the vicinity of the Green Zone," causing minor damage to one building but no casualties. He couldn't confirm whether the building was in the zone.

If the explosions in Baghdad on Friday occurred inside the Green Zone, it would be the first time in several weeks that the seat of power of the U.S.-led coalition power was hit.

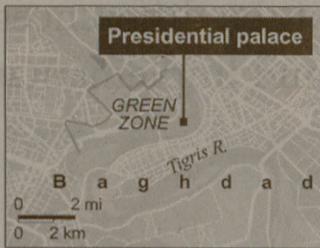
Charles Krohn, a Pentagon press official, said by telephone from his room inside the Green Zone that he heard the explosions.

"I heard what appeared to be incoming mortar rounds," Krohn said. "I was shaken and I heard a couple of thumps. I felt the vibrations."

The zone includes the Al

A palatial embassy

Saddam Hussein's former Presidential Palace, the paramount symbol of excess in his 23-year dictatorship, is the likely site for the next U.S. Embassy in Iraq.



SOURCE: Associated Press AP

Rasheed Hotel, which was used by military and coalition civilian employees until a rocket attack Oct. 26 that killed a U.S. colonel and wounded 18 other people. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz was in the hotel at the time, but escaped injury.

Three Iraqis were killed in the truck that exploded Thursday at Champion Base in Ramadi, 60 miles west of Baghdad.

On Tuesday, suicide bombers, one in a car and another on foot, blew themselves up at the gates of two U.S. military bases, wounding at least 61 American soldiers but failing to inflict deadly casualties on the scale of recent attacks in Iraq.

Most of the soldiers were slightly hurt by debris and flying glass, indicating the defenses around U.S. facilities — sand barriers, high cement walls and roadblocks leading to the entrances of bases — were having an effect.

The suicide bombers' continued testing of U.S. defenses showed their tenacity; they seek to undermine American resolve

by inflicting mass casualties with a single strike.

Also Thursday, the military reported one U.S. soldier drowned and another was missing after a patrol boat accident on the Tigris River in Baghdad.

"The soldiers were conducting routine patrols on the Tigris River when one of the soldiers fell overboard, and the other soldier jumped in to save him," the U.S. Central Command said in a statement.

U.S. soldiers said an Apache helicopter that crash-landed near the northern city of Mosul might have been hit by ground fire while making a low pass over the area.

A military spokesman had insisted that the helicopter was forced to crash land Wednesday because of mechanical failure and that the uninjured crew reported no ground fire. But a commander later said that he didn't know whether ground fire brought down the 101st Airborne Division helicopter.

The Apache came down near a highway south of Mosul, Iraq's third-largest city. Troops guarding the site Thursday morning said the chopper had been hit by enemy fire. They asked not to be identified.

Brig. Gen. Frank Helmick later said the cause of the crash was unclear. "It could have been a mechanical failure but again, we are looking at all possibilities," he said.

Mosul was the site of the deadliest incident so far involving U.S. forces. On Nov. 17, two Black Hawk helicopters collided and crashed, killing 17 soldiers. Officers have since acknowledged that ground fire was the likely cause.

"I really do hope that student leaders and administrators know that we're not trying to write anything bad about anyone; we're just trying to inform," Webb said. "I want any organization to feel like they can come to us. We're just as happy to print positive news as anything else, or more."

Webb said her main goal as editor is to serve the student body the best way she can.

"That includes those who work here and the rest of the student body in letting them know what's going on in the community," she said. "That's who we serve."

After graduating in December of 2004, Webb said she plans to work for a publishing company or newspaper.

"I've always loved reading everything, and so I figured why not make a job out of it?" she said.

Still, she said there was once a time when she would not have imagined herself working at a newspaper.

"I never thought I'd work at a newspaper because I always hated them," Webb said. "But I really appreciated it after working here. I realized how much reporters care about the community and how hard they work."

Webb said at The Battalion, she found not only a passion for journalism, but a group of friends whom she would have not known.

"I think she found something here she didn't expect to find," George said.

Webb

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The Battalion as much as I do," she said. "I want to motivate them and have them feel pride in their work."

Battalion adviser Ron George said Webb has the experience, courage and conviction to be a great editor.

"I think what I like most about Elizabeth is she really cares about The Battalion, and that'll keep you going," George said.

The semesterly turnover of management is both a blessing and a curse, George said, because new editors bring fresh ideas but also have to learn about their new positions. Webb, he said, is a "capable editor" who has reached for the satisfaction of leadership at The Battalion.

"She has grown a lot since she started working for us, and she's grown into this job," George said.

Webb said she will continue student leader columns, which allow various student leaders outlets to express their views, and "Meet the Batt" receptions in which students can meet with members of The Battalion's staff to discuss the newspaper and issues on campus.

She said she also hopes to maintain an open-door policy with student leaders, organizations and administrators.

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