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Monday, February 9, 2004

THE BATTALION

NATION

## Kerry criticizes Bush; rivals to stay in race

By Jonathan D. Salant THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fresh off wins in two caucus states, John Kerry sought a third victory Sunday while questioning President Bush's National Guard service and adding another endorsement. Democratic presidential rivals Wesley Clark, Howard Dean and John Edwards pledged to stay in the race, vowing not to be deterred by Kerry's successes.

Kerry, campaigning like a front-runner, ignored his primary opponents and criticized Bush on Iraq. He picked up backing from Virginia Gov. Mark Warner and awaited the results of Maine's Democratic caucuses, where 24 pledged delegates to the Democratic convention were at stake.

Clark, Dean and Edwards, appearing separately on the Sunday television talk shows, all said they would continue to challenge Kerry for the Democratic nomination despite the Massachusetts senator's advantage in the polls and in endorsements and his wins in nine of the first 11 primaries, including two contests on Saturday.

"Real voters are going to decide who the nominee is," Dean said on CNN's "Late Edition."

Dean, the former front-runner and winless since the start of voting, declined in separate interviews to repeat his earlier assertion that he would withdraw from the race if he lost the Feb. 17 Wisconsin primary.

Both Clark and Edwards said they expected to run well in the next three primaries — Virginia and Tennessee on Tuesday and Wisconsin — but would remain in the race regardless. Clark, en route to a jobs forum

in Racine, Wis., said on CNN that he would run at least through the

March 2 "Super Tuesday" pri maries, including in California Ohio and New York.

"We've got a lot of suppo across this country," said Clark a retired Army general. "Wed expect to go on and do expect be there on Super Tuesday.'

Edwards noted on "I News Sunday" that some percent of delegates to the Democratic Convention will still be up to grabs after Wisconsin votes.

"I view this very much as long-term process, and we're this for the long term," said th North Carolina senator, who visited Baptist churches i Richmond, Va., before attending Democratic dinner Nashville, Tenn., that Clark also planned to attend.

American Research Group polls give Kerry sizable leads in all three states: 11 points over meet that wa Edwards and 12 over Clark in the score st Tennessee; 13 points over Edwards and 18 over Clark in Nel Nash said Virginia; and 26 points over Clark and 31 over Edwards in Wisconsin. The margin of error in each poll taken last week was plus or minus 4 points.

Kerry also has more than twice has they have as many delegates as his closest pursuer, with 412 to Dean's 174 according to an Associated Press From the beginning tally. It takes 2,162 delegates to Myard medley win the nomination.

Accepting Warner's endorse ason A&M wa ment in Richmond, Kerry said shing second Bush had not fully answered question fastest tim tions about whether he fulfilled his National Guard service in Alabama during the Vietnam War. "The issue here is, as I have

heard it raised, is was he pres and active in Alabama at the time he was supposed to be, said Kerry, a decorated Vietnam War veteran. "I don't have the answer to that question and ju because you get an honorable discharge does not in fact answer that question.'

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