

THE MISSISSIPPI PRESS

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DISARMING IRAQ

FIGHTING INTENSIFIES; CASUALTIES MOUNT

ON THE FRONT

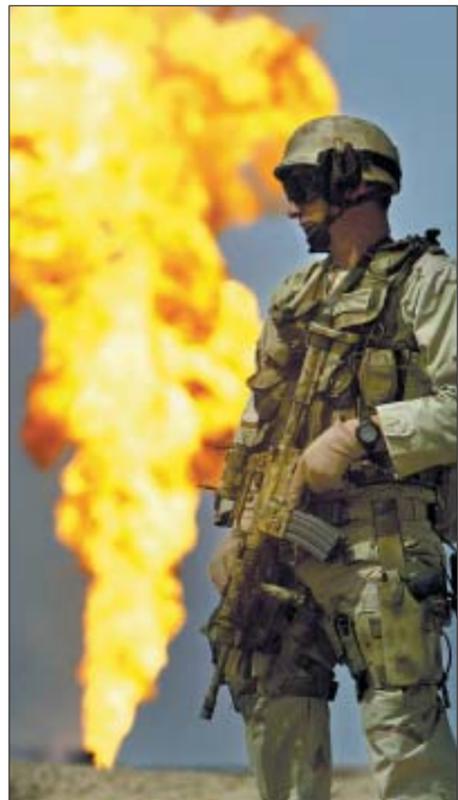
Allied troops interview Iraqi POWs to try to find chemical sites

BAGHDAD

Iraqi TV shows photos of captured American soldiers

AT HOME

Pro-war demonstrators show support for U.S. troops



AP

A U.S. soldier from the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force stands guard at a burning oil well at the Rumeila Oil fields in Iraq. Several oil wells have been set ablaze by retreating Iraqi troops.



AP

U.S. Marines from the 15 Marine Expeditionary Unit take cover as bombs are dropped during a pitched battle at the main Gulf port in Umm Qsar Sunday. Coalition troops were trying to mop up resistance at the port so it could be used for humanitarian shipments.

Reservist: 'Just pray for us'

By NATALIE CHAMBERS
Mississippi Press Staff

MOSS POINT — When National Guard Reservist LaCarnya Robinson, 30, left her family Sunday, she had no idea when she would see them again.

"I just had a day off. We call it a commander's day and I wanted to spend it with my family," she said.

Robinson's unit, National Guards 890th Engineering Battalion out of Pascagoula, was deployed Feb. 12 in preparation for Operation Iraqi Freedom. In addition to leaving family she also left a job as a McDonald's restaurant manager.



Robinson

Robinson said Robinson said her unit is currently in training at Fort Stewart, Ga.

"We do a lot of combat training and PT (physical training)," she said.

She does not know when the call will be given for the unit to ship out for the Middle East.

"It can sometimes get depressing. You don't want to watch the news," she said.

As mother of three — Bobby Robinson, 13, Jeanea Robinson, 11 and Jamal Peyton, 8 — Robinson's concern is not only on protecting

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Allies run into setbacks on road to Baghdad

As many as 21 American soldiers killed, captured

By CALVIN WOODWARD
Associated Press Writer

Iraq used ambushes and even fake surrenders to kill or capture up to 21 American troops on Sunday, inflicting the first significant casualties on the allied forces driving toward Baghdad. U.S. war leaders declared the invasion on target despite the bloody setbacks.

Up to nine Marines died and a dozen U.S. soldiers were taken prisoner in surprise engagements

with Iraqis at An Nasiriyah, a southern city far from the forward positions of the allied force.

On the third day of the ground war, any expectation that Iraqi defenders would simply fold was gone.

"Clearly they are not a beaten force," said Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "This is going to get a lot harder."

Even so, the U.S.-British coalition fought to within 100 miles of Baghdad and tended to a growing northern front.

And at the end of a day filled with plenty of bad news for allied forces, U.S. officials said troops had made what could be an important discovery: a

suspected chemical factory near the city of Najaf. U.S. Central Command said troops were examining several "sites of interest," but that it was premature to call the Najaf facility a chemical weapons factory.

Early Monday, Baghdad was bombarded with what appeared to be its strongest airstrikes since Friday, even as a mosque blared "God is great" and "Thanks be to God," perhaps to boost Iraqis' morale.

Allied soldiers came under attack in a series of ruses Sunday, U.S. officials said, with one group of Iraqis waving the white flag of surrender, then

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INSIDE

Warships poised for threats in Persian Gulf



Marines treated for injuries sustained in southern Iraq, 8-A.

ABOARD THE USS KITTY HAWK (AP) — A whistle blows an alert over the shipwide intercom: "Snoopy team, starboard bow!" Spotters with powerful binoculars rush to catch sight of whatever is approaching the aircraft carrier's safe zone: a plane? a ship? a tiny sailing dhow?

If it's hostile — an incoming missile, an enemy warship, a suspicious boat — the *Kitty Hawk* can activate its defense system of missiles, automatic cannon and machine guns within seconds.

This time, the object looming on the horizon is a friend — the *USS Abraham Lincoln*, one of three American aircraft carriers and dozens of other warships crowded into the north-



AP

An F/A-18 Hornet is prepared for take-off on the flight deck of the USS Harry S. Truman Sunday.

ern Persian Gulf for the war in Iraq.

The ship's radar, electronic sensors and human eyes are constantly on watch for threats among the oil tankers, fishing boats and warships crowding the Gulf. "We are locked and loaded and ready to go," said Cmdr. Bob Hahn, head of the Command Directions Center,

which handles the *Kitty Hawk's* tactical defense.

The carrier's on-board defenses include Sea Sparrow and Rolling Airframe missiles, radar-directed Gatling guns and .50-caliber and M-60 machine guns.

But the most lethal force is the air wing — about 75 warplanes including F/A-18 Hor-

net and F-14 Tomcat fighters armed with a variety of missiles and several Seahawk helicopters that can carry MK-46 anti-submarine torpedoes and Hellfire missiles.

"We can get something up in a matter of seconds" if a threat is detected, Hahn said.

The three carriers in the Gulf are sending warplanes on bombing missions over Iraq. But mostly they are providing air support for U.S. and British troops, officers say. Smaller ships have been firing cruise missiles at Iraqi targets.

Although Iraq has fired several missiles at Kuwait since the war started, the Navy doesn't consider the threat from the air to be as worrisome as that from the sea.



AP

A Tomahawk Land Attack Missile is launched from the USS Cape St. George in the Mediterranean Sea Sunday.



This Old Crab supports our troops

SPORTS, 1-B

Pas grad plays baseball for Coast Guard Academy

Muted by war, Oscars tones down telecast, 5-A



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