

'Sharpest engagements' bring progress at a cost

Marines drawn into firefight

By MICHAEL WILSON
 New York Times

Nasiriyah, Iraq — What looked to be an easy ride into this city turned into a messy firefight on Sunday when Iraqi tanks, regular soldiers and guerrillas darted through the streets and turned their mortars, artillery cannons, rockets and rifles on advancing U.S. Marines.

The battle began shortly after dawn on Sunday. The infantry unit, code-named Timber Wolf, approached the southern edge of Nasiriyah, which straddles the Euphrates River. The city's bridges, which were eventually captured, are essential to the allied troops behind Marine Task Force Tarawa, who are looking to head north, toward Baghdad.

There was little clue what was in store for the Marines — the deadliest battle of the war so far.

Minutes before 7 a.m., Col. Glenn Starnes, commanding officer of the artillery battalion, listening on a radio several miles south, shouted, "Timber Wolf is taking fire!"

Tanks, part of a light armor



GETTY IMAGES

21 killed or missing as troops press on

By PATRICK E. TYLER
 New York Times

Kuwait City — American and British ground forces on Sunday suffered their worst casualties so far as they battled determined Iraqi forces on two fronts in what an American commander said were "the sharpest engagements of the war."

Military officials in the war zone reported that at least 21 American soldiers were missing or killed and 50 or more wounded in a day of ambushes, accidents and tank and artillery engagements. Precise casualty figures were not immediately available.

In addition, a U.S. Patriot missile mistakenly downed a British Tornado GR4 jet as it returned to Kuwait from a mission over Iraq. The two crew members were believed to be dead.

And an international furor erupted when the Arab-based satellite station Al-Jazeera broadcast video, apparently made by Iraqi state television, that showed brief interviews with five captured U.S. soldiers and displayed the bodies of several others.

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.

Most of Sunday's losses occurred at Nasiriyah, along the Euphrates River, about 100 miles north of the Kuwaiti border, where an Army maintenance convoy was ambushed, resulting in the death or capture of about a dozen soldiers, some of whose images were beamed around the world by Arab television.

Later, Marines attacked the city, and during a fierce battle with about 500 Iraqi defenders, a rocket-propelled grenade struck a troop carrier, witnesses said, killing up to nine soldiers.

Military officials said dozens more were wounded in the battle, and late on Sunday helicopters were seen ferrying the

Please see IRAQ, 7A

Fast start in war leaves Bush facing overconfident U.S.

By R.W. APPLE JR.
 New York Times

Washington — Like a coach seeking a psychological advantage, President Bush pressed an effort on Sunday to temper public anticipation of an early, relatively painless victory in the fighting in Iraq.

"It is evident that it's going to take a while to achieve our objective," the president said on the White House lawn after returning from Camp David. "I can assure the American people we're making good progress, and I can also assure them that this is just the beginning of a tough fight."

Bush spoke as word reached Washington of a sharp clash, surely the sharpest so far in this second Persian Gulf War, near Nasiriyah, a tactically important city between Basra

Please see ANALYSIS, 8A

Please see FIREFIGHT, 5A

Complex could be chemical plant

U.S. forces investigate seized facility south of Baghdad

By ESTHER SCHRADER
 Los Angeles Times

Washington — U.S. troops are investigating a seized facility for evidence it may have been involved in the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction, U.S. officials said Sunday.

The plant is near the city of Najaf, about 90 miles south of Baghdad and is one of several suspected weapons facilities the military is investigating, a senior defense official said.

"We are looking into sites of interest," the U.S. Central Command in Doha, Qatar, said in a statement late Sunday when asked to confirm the seizure of the factory in Najaf, which was first reported in today's Jerusalem Post.

WAR AGAINST IRAQ

■ **Grenade attack:** Suspect made anti-American statements. **3A**

■ **Guide to coverage:** **2A**

■ **On the Web:**

www.jsonline.com/war

A reporter from that newspaper is traveling with the 1st Brigade of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division, and she wrote that she accompanied the U.S. forces when they took control of the facility. About 30 Iraqi troops, including a general, surrendered at the plant, the newspaper reported.

One U.S. soldier was lightly

Please see PLANT, 5A



GETTY IMAGES

A U.S. soldier at an American camp in Qatar reacts to a television broadcast showing U.S. soldiers captured by the Iraqi military. The footage also showed some dead soldiers. U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld charged that the broadcast violated the Geneva Convention. **Story on 5A.**

U.S. Marines carry an injured comrade during a gunbattle Sunday in the southern Iraqi city of Nasiriyah. The Marines suffered a number of casualties in fighting throughout the city.

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TODAY'S TMJ4 WEATHER

TODAY
63 / 40
 Mild again. A few sprinkles possible

TOMORROW

46 / 40
 Cooler. A chance for light rain.

MAP AND FORECASTS ON BACK OF SPORTS 8 SECTIONS

GOOD MORNING

TODAY'S TOP NEWS

METRO

Tower takes time to tumble

A blast from 80 sticks of dynamite notwithstanding, a 500-foot-high power plant smokestack stands for several hours before falling. **1B**

HEALTH & SCIENCE

Breath of life

Three days after her brother died of polio in 1948, Martha Mason went to bed terrified that she had the virus. Mason, 11, hadn't told her parents how much

her body hurt. But after that night, Mason never walked again. Paralyzed from the neck down, she has spent most of the last 54 years lying inside an iron lung. **1G**

SPORTS

MU aide gets news

Marquette men's basketball special assistant Trey Schwab has moved up to No. 1 on the lung transplant list at the University of Wisconsin Medical Center. **1C**

A WORD —

CARTOUCHE (kar TOOSH)

A scroll-like ornament or tablet, especially as an architectural feature. *n.*

Oscars all jazzed about 'Chicago'

Musical earns 6 awards, including best picture; 'The Pianist' takes home 3

By DUANE DUDEK
 Journal Sentinel film critic

The 75th annual Oscar ceremony Sunday was a tale of two cities: the odds-on favorite "Chicago," which was named best picture, and Baghdad, which was on the lips of some presenters and winners and on the minds of everyone watching.

On a day when news about the war in Iraq turned dire, television served cultural comfort food — the NBA, NCAA, PGA and the ultimate weapon of mass distraction, the Academy Awards.

While some felt holding the awards ceremony at a time when Americans are in harm's way was inappropriate, the films represented and the opinions expressed from the

podium were snapshots of a democracy obsessed with ideas and tolerant of dissent — of which a worldwide audience of 1 billion could only be envious.

An evening of surprises

"Chicago" won six awards, including for Catherine Zeta-Jones as supporting actress and for art direction, costume, sound and film editing. Otherwise, it was an evening of surprises.

Roman Polanski won best director in absentia for the Holocaust tale "The Pianist." Polanski, who fled the country 25 years ago to avoid sentencing for having sex with a 13-year-old girl, beat "Chicago" director Rob Marshall and Martin Scorsese, the legendary director of "Gangs of New York" who lost for the fourth time.

Nicole Kidman was named best actress "by a nose" by presenter

THE WINNERS

Results from the 75th annual Academy Awards

■ **BEST PICTURE**
 "Chicago"

■ **BEST DIRECTOR**
 Roman Polanski
 "The Pianist"

■ **BEST ACTOR**
 Adrien Brody
 "The Pianist"

■ **BEST ACTRESS**
 Nicole Kidman
 "The Hours"

■ **BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR**
 Chris Cooper
 "Adaptation"

■ **BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS**
 Catherine Zeta-Jones
 "Chicago"

IN CUE

■ **Lots of glitz:** So much for the somber evening. **1E**

■ **The winners:** Complete list. **3E**

See www.jsonline.com/oscars

Please see AWARDS, 10A

