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Two More Weeks

Immigration and Naturalization Services delays  
implementation of international student tracking system.  
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Victory Levied

UNC falls to Wake Forest  
in fourth straight loss.  
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Weather

Today: Partly Cloudy; H 68, L 49  
Tuesday: A.M. Rain; H 65, L 27  
Wednesday: Cloudy; H 43, L 15



Volume 110, Issue 148

Monday, February 3, 2003

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"The cause in which they died will continue. Mankind is led into the darkness beyond our world by the inspiration of discovery and the longing to understand." — GEORGE W. BUSH, President

## LOOKING FOR ANSWERS

### DEBRIS FROM SHUTTLE FALLS OVER 2 STATES AS INVESTIGATION INTO CAUSE BEGINS

The Associated Press / CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.

Just before it disintegrated, space shuttle Columbia experienced an abnormal rise in temperature and wind resistance that forced the craft's automatic pilot to make rapid changes to its flight path — possible evidence that some heat-protection tiles were missing or damaged, NASA said Sunday.

Engineers began assembling a grim puzzle from debris recovered in Texas and Louisiana and disclosed computerized data showing that the unusual events before Saturday's accident occurred in the wheel well and fuselage on the left side of the shuttle — the same side hit by a piece of fuel-tank insulation during the launch 16 days earlier.

Shuttle program manager Ron Dittmore cautioned that the data were preliminary but said the combination of events and data suggest that the thermal tiles that protected the shuttle from burning up during re-entry may have been damaged Jan. 16.

"We've got some more detective work, but we're making progress inch by inch," Dittmore said, adding that engineers are trying to extract 32 seconds more of computerized data from the doomed spacecraft.

As engineers pinpointed the exact satellite locations of debris, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration said it had found remains from all seven of the astronauts who perished.

Dittmore said that earlier in the mission, NASA had investigated aggressively the possible effects of the impact from the fuel tank's foam insulation and concluded that "it did not represent a safety concern."

"As we gather more evidence, certainly the evidence may take us in another

direction," he said.

Dittmore said the engineering data showed a rise of 20 to 30 degrees in the left wheel well about seven minutes before communication was lost with the spacecraft. Then there was a rise of about 60 degrees over five minutes in the left-hand side of the fuselage above the wing, he said.

On the right side, the shuttle temperature rose the normal 15 degrees over the same period, he said. All the readings came from sensors underneath the thermal tiles on the aluminum hull of the craft.

The temperature rises were followed by increased drag on the spacecraft that caused its automated flight system to adjust its path, he said. The adjustments were large enough that "we have never seen it to this degree" but still were within the shuttle's capabilities, he said.

Communication with the shuttle was lost soon after. "It was if some-

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LUFKIN DAILY NEWS/MARC R. MASFERRER

Tracy Smith (left) and Don Jacobs look at a large piece of shuttle debris found in a cow pasture in Alto, Texas, on Sunday.



AP/TERRY RENNA

NASA security removes the space shuttle Columbia flag from the flagpole at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla., after the Columbia broke up over Texas on Saturday.

INVESTIGATION:

## NASA Hurt By Shortage Of Funding, Key Experts

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Shortages of key experts, tight budgets and mounting safety concerns all plagued the nation's space program in recent years, according to a trail of reports by congressional auditors, outside panels and NASA retirees.

How much of a forewarning they were to Saturday's space shuttle Columbia tragedy could be determined in the next several weeks.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration critics both in and outside the government and investigators into the accident are sure to comb the reports for anything that might explain the disintegration of the spacecraft nearly 40 miles above Texas as it screamed toward a landing in Florida at more than 12,000 miles per hour.

As President Bush took office, the investigative arm of Congress found in 2001 that NASA's shuttle work force over the years had declined significantly, to the point of reducing the agency's ability to safely support the program.

Many key areas were not sufficiently staffed by qualified workers, and the remaining work force showed signs of overwork and fatigue, the General Accounting Office stated.

There were other warnings, including a report to Congress last April on See INVESTIGATION, Page 4

## Panel Votes To Modify Title IX

By ASHLEY HOLT  
Staff Writer

The U.S. Commission on Opportunity in Athletics approved Thursday changes to the Title IX amendment that will redistribute scholarships to male and female athletes based on the proportions of each in an institution's student body.

The landmark Title IX is part of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and requires federally funded schools to give equal opportunities to women in college athletics, halting gender discrimination in collegiate sports.

The sharply divided commission, which was formed in July and is headed by U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, reviewed and passed a series of recommendations that would change the law by shifting the measures used to calculate the number of students in federally funded schools.

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## SOLDIERS BID FAREWELL

By MATT HANSON  
Assistant State & National Editor

DURHAM — Soldiers from the 30th Corps Support Group gathered in the gym of Northern High School on Sunday to share hugs, tears and a rousing rendition of "God Bless America" with their families and loved ones.

This week, the soldiers will join thousands of other N.C. National Guardsmen who already have been mobilized for Operation Enduring Freedom.

For the last week, soldiers of the 30th CSG have been working diligently to "make sure the unit is locked and cocked and packed and ready to go," said Maj. Gen. William E. Ingram.

All the soldiers have left to do is load the last of the equipment, file some necessary paperwork and spend time with family members, said Staff Sgt. James Martin.

Martin said he will spend the next few days doing some close bonding with his wife. The two plan to go out for a nice dinner at their favorite restaurant.

This week, the 30th CSG will move to an active duty post somewhere in the United



DTH/BRIAN CASSELLA

Members of the 30th Corps Support Group of the N.C. National Guard stand during a mobilization ceremony Sunday.

States, where it will go through a validation process to hone skills and ensure that it will be able to operate in the field. From there, soldiers are slated to report to the Central Command Area of Operations in southwest Asia.

Martin, who specializes in water purification projects, said he never has been deployed overseas. But, he said, he is prepared to begin the process this week. "We all have to be ready," he said. "That's what we signed up for."

In speeches to the soldiers and support-

ers at the ceremony Sunday, commanding officers said even family members staying back home need to be mentally and emotionally prepared for the times ahead.

"The sacrifices you endure are important for our nation," said Brig. Gen. Charles E. Gibson. "Hopefully, that will make it easier to bear."

Ingram charged families to stay strong and "take care of business" back on the home front. He said this will allow the soldiers to continue to do their jobs effectively.

Supporters of Maj. Marybel Johnson will help her family through the length of the mobilization by operating a Web site that will allow Johnson to communicate with her family. They will be able to post pictures and messages for each other on the site. It also will serve as a message board for friends so they can schedule who will be cooking meals for Johnson's husband and three children on any given night.

Though Ingram said the story of the citi-

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## 9 Victims Still Critical After Kinston Blast

Man died Friday in burn center

By ELYSE ASHBURN  
State & National Editor

The Kinston factory blast claimed the life of another victim Friday, bringing the death toll to four and leaving nine victims still in critical condition at UNC Hospitals' N.C. Jaycee Burn Center.

Kevin Cruiss, 22, of Kinston died in the burn center Friday from injuries sustained when the West Pharmaceuticals Services plant exploded Wednesday.

Hospital officials declined to comment on the specific cause of death.

Cruiss was one of 10 patients — nine men and one woman — flown to the burn center Wednesday.

Nine patients remain in critical condition and are receiving around-the-clock care, Michelle Boyce, UNC Hospitals nursing health supervisor, said Sunday. None of the patients are

fully aware of their surroundings, though some issue minimal responses when spoken to or touched, she said.

Boyce said that all nine are breathing with assistance and that doctors have made no plans to remove them from ventilators, though they no longer require manual resuscitation.

"It's going to be a long haul for all of them," she said.

But the victims' families hold out hope — even faith — for speedy recoveries.

"All we can do now is pray," said Mary Ratliff, mother of Sharedenna Ratliff, who was burned severely in the explosion. "It's in God's hands now."

Family members such as Mary Ratliff haunt hospital corridors and waiting rooms, huddled in anxious groups. News is infrequent, visits even more so.

No more than two visitors

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Exploration is really the essence of the human spirit.

Frank Borman