

The Daily Tar Heel

VOLUME 111, ISSUE 17

www.dailytarheel.com

TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2003

FIGHT FOR BAGHDAD LOOMS

OPPOSITION INTENSIFIES AS ALLIES NEAR CAPITAL

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SOUTHERN IRAQ — Aiming for Saddam Hussein's seat of power, U.S.-led warplanes and helicopters attacked Republican Guard units defending Baghdad on Monday while ground troops advanced to within 50 miles of the Iraqi capital.

The helicopter assault marked the first known engagement between forces in central Iraq, and many of the U.S. craft were hit by Iraqi groundfire. One went down behind enemy lines — the cause was unknown — and the Pentagon said the two-person crew had been taken prisoner.

Five days into Operation Iraqi Freedom, resistance prevented U.S. and British forces from securing the southern cities of Basra and An Nasiriyah and thwarted efforts to extinguish burning oil wells.

"These things are never easy," conceded British Prime Minister Tony Blair on the day his country suffered its first combat casualty of the war.

"There will be some difficult times ahead, but (the war) is going to plan despite the tragedies."

Hussein sought to rally his own country

in a televised appearance. "Be patient, brothers, because God's victory will be ours soon," he said.

Despite Hussein's defiant pose, a military barracks in the northern part of the country was bombed, and Baghdad fell under renewed air attack by day and by night. Iraqis set up mortar positions south of the city and piled sandbags around government buildings and other strategic locations in evident anticipation of a battle to come.

"Coalition forces are closing in on Baghdad," Maj. Gen. Stanley McChrystal told reporters at the Pentagon.

He said U.S. Apache helicopters attacked Hussein's Republican Guard forces arrayed around Baghdad while another official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said a "large portion" of the day's bombing runs were dedicated to hitting the same units.

Defense officials at the Pentagon said the Apaches encountered heavy groundfire during their assault on the Medina armored division. One official said many Apaches were hit by fire but managed to kill about 10 Iraqi tanks before cutting off their attack.

Iraqi state television Monday showed two

U.S. Army pilots captured by Iraqi forces after their Apache helicopter was forced down during heavy fighting in central Iraq.

Gen. Tommy Franks, the U.S. war commander, confirmed that a helicopter did not return from its mission Sunday and that its two-man crew was missing: Chief Warrant Officer Ronald D. Young Jr., 26, of Lithia Springs, Ga., and Chief Warrant Officer David S. Williams, 30, of Orlando, Fla.

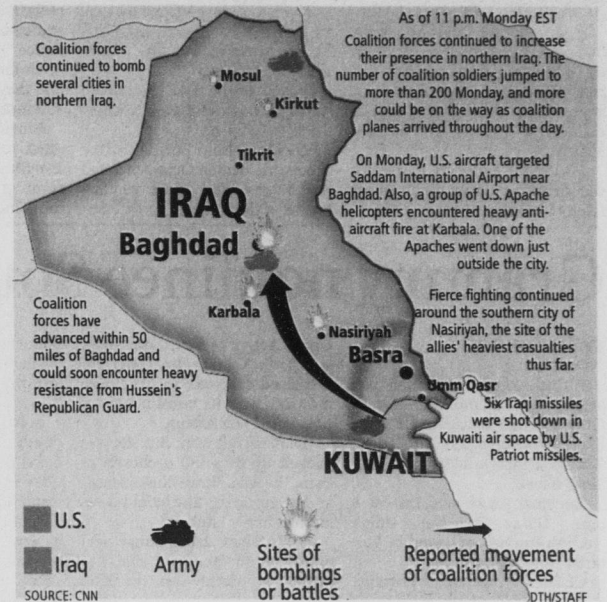
On Monday night, the Pentagon declared the men prisoners of war.

The U.S. Air Force flew more than 1,500 sorties over Iraq on Monday. So far, 80 percent of the bombs and missiles used by the Air Force have been guided by lasers, radar, satellites or video cameras, a defense official said.

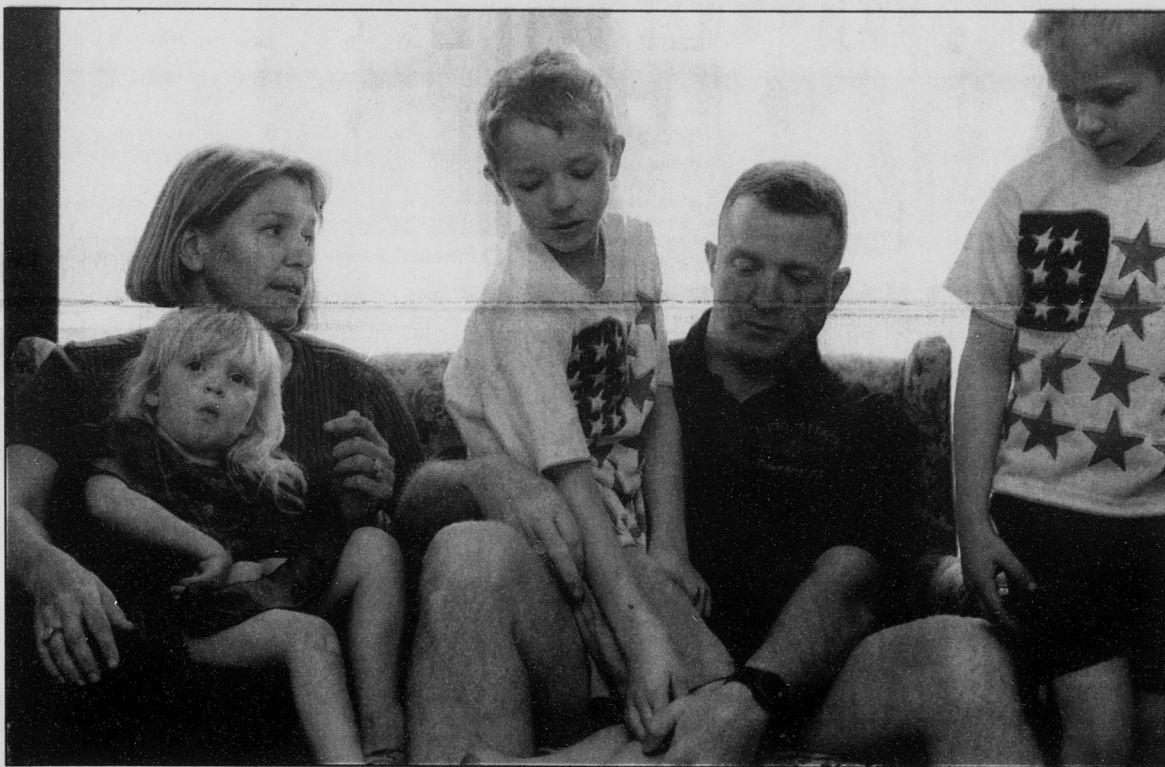
The Pentagon says the munitions are highly accurate, but Iraq claimed that 252 civilians had been killed Sunday, including 194 in Baghdad. It did not give any figures for military deaths.

Asked about ground forces, McChrystal said, "We have not gotten into direct firefights

SEE WAR, PAGE 6



"I told her commander, 'Please take me' ... but ... she's twice the officer I am." MAJ. CHRIS JOHNSON



DTH PHOTOS/BRIAN CASSELLA

Mary and Chris Johnson sit with their children, (left to right) Claire, 3, Alex, 5, and Matthew, 7. Mary is preparing to be deployed overseas in the next few days.

FAMILY BROUGHT TOGETHER, SEPARATED BY MILITARY LIFE



Mary speaks with her son Alex during the children's visit to Fort Bragg on Monday. Afterward, Mary said goodbye, knowing she could be deployed any day.

BY MATT HANSON

ASSISTANT STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR

Maj. Chris Johnson's time in college was a means to an end.

"You had to have a degree to be an officer, and you had to be an officer to go to flight school," he explained.

Chris Johnson has flown helicopters for the N.C. Army National Guard for nearly 16 years now, and as efforts at world diplomacy ended, he was ready to fly in Kuwait and Iraq.

But Maj. Chris Johnson is not going to war. His wife, Mary, is.

"The most humbling thing a man can do is to spend his whole life in uniform and when the balloon goes up and someone in your family goes to war, it's your wife," Chris said.

Maj. Mary Johnson was a rebellious basketball star at her Pennsylvania high school. She went to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in search of a scholarship-funded education and a little discipline. She was the first woman in West Point's color guard.

After graduation, Mary headed south to flight school in Fort Rucker, Ala., where she graduated third in her class. Mary was ready to take on an ambitious assignment, having aced her academics thus far.

"I was never going to get married, I was going to be chief of staff of the Army, and I was never going to have kids," Mary said. "Then I met Chris, and we

were engaged two months later."

The couple met in flight school in the beginning of 1987, were engaged and then married shortly after graduating in October.

MAJORS JOHNSON

An occasional series about a military family separated by war.

The top tier of their wedding cake was crowned with a helicopter.

From there, Chris and Mary made it a priority to avoid being separated.

Chris flew training runs with the National Guard until December and then slipped into a full-time position. The two decided Mary also would get a job in North Carolina.

After pulling some strings and declining an offer to fly Black Hawk helicopters in Korea, Mary accepted a job in North Carolina. This would put her in a strategic position in terms of family planning, allowing her to become a stay-at-home mother when she had children.

She accepted a job as a traffic controller, which allowed her to fly Iroquois "Huey" helicopters at Fort Bragg, home to the historic 82nd Airborne Division.

"I was thinking, '82nd, high-speed, this is going to be great!'" Mary said.

When she arrived on base, however, she was surprised by the base's outdated facilities, which includ-

SEE FAMILY, PAGE 4

ANALYSIS

Hussein has long history of total rule

BY ALEXANDRA DODSON

STAFF WRITER

Long before the gas-guzzling sport utility vehicles, biochemical warfare and online news reports that symbolize the relationship between the United States and Iraq, Saddam Hussein was taking his first steps toward absolute power.

Hussein was born in 1937 in Tikrit, Iraq — a country that had gained its independence from England only five years earlier.

Hussein thrust himself into the volatile world of Iraqi politics at a young age, said Jim Phillips, a research fellow for Middle Eastern Affairs at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank based in Washington, D.C.

Phillips said that as a young man, Hussein became active in street gangs and the secret police. At age 19, he joined the Arab Baath Socialist Party, in which he gradually rose in rank and power. Baath was founded as a secular Arabic socialist party, Phillips said.

Hussein's interest in the government and military continued, although he was denied admission to the Baghdad Military Academy in 1957. It was only after he married in 1958, attempted to assassinate the Iraqi prime minister the following year and was formal-

SEE HUSSEIN, PAGE 6

Dusk-to-dawn panhandling banned in town

BY SHANNAN BOWEN

STAFF WRITER

The Chapel Hill Town Council on Monday night faced for the second time the tension and competing views that accompanied a proposed amendment to the town's panhandling ordinance.

The new restrictions, which ban vocal and direct approach of panhandlers at night, were passed by a 7-2 council vote.

The ordinance returned to the council after a 5-4 vote at its March 3 meeting could not approve the nighttime direct-approach ban, which would add to a passed amendment that prohibits solicitation along any type of roadway in the town.

Council members Mark Kleinschmidt and Bill Strom opposed the new ordinance, which went into effect Monday night, because of concerns about constitutionality and questions of effectiveness.

Council members Ed Harrison and Jim Ward changed their previous votes after

SEE PANHANDLING, PAGE 6

ONLINE

■ ATN set to upgrade wireless computer security
■ UNC's academic plan nears completion
Find more stories at www.dailytarheel.com.

INSIDE

TAKING A STANCE

Chapel Hill restaurants express their views on Iraq war. **PAGE 3**



SPORTS

END OF THE ROAD

Colorado upsets Tar Heels 86-67 in second round of NCAA Tournament. **PAGE 9**

WEATHER

TODAY Mostly Sunny, High 75, Low 46
WEDNESDAY Isolated T-storms, High 71, Low 40
THURSDAY Partly Cloudy, High 61, Low 40