

9 killed in helicopter crash

U.S. death toll in Iraq nearing 500

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FALLUJAH, Iraq — A Black Hawk medivac helicopter, clearly marked with a red cross, crashed Thursday after a witness said it was hit by a rocket, killing all nine U.S. soldiers aboard. In Baghdad, a C-5 transport plane with 63 passengers and crew limped safely back to the airport after being struck by fire from insurgents.

About 80 Iraqi prisoners, meanwhile, were released from Baghdad's Abu Ghraib prison, but they were not the detainees that U.S. authorities had promised would be freed under a special amnesty.

The military said a U.S. soldier died Wednesday of injuries suffered in a mortar attack that wounded 30 other troops and a civilian west of Baghdad.

The deaths brought to at least 495 the number of Americans killed in Iraq from hostile and non-hostile causes since the start of the war in March, according to the U.S. Central Command and the

Department of Defense.

The Black Hawk went down about 4 miles south of Fallujah, a stronghold of the anti-American insurgency, the 82nd Airborne Division said.

The military said the cause of the crash was not known, but a witness, Mohammed Ahmed al-Jamali, said he heard the distinctive whoosh of a rocket and saw the helicopter, clearly marked with red crosses signifying its medical mission, struck in the tail.

The helicopter was a medical evacuation aircraft but it was unclear if it was carrying patients, a military official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Twice before, U.S. helicopters have gone down near Fallujah, a city 35 miles west of Baghdad.

A OH-58 Kiowa observation helicopter went down Jan. 2, killing one soldier. Military officials said it almost certainly was shot down. And on Nov. 2, a Chinook helicopter was shot down near the city, killing 16 U.S. soldiers and

injuring 26. The military believes a SA-7 shoulder-fired missile hit one of the chopper's rear-mounted engines.

In Thursday's close call at Baghdad International Airport, a transport plane carrying 63 people declared an in-flight emergency because of excessive vibrations in its No. 4 engine and landed safely shortly after takeoff, the Air Force said. The Air Force later issued a brief statement saying initial information indicated the engine exploded as a result of "hostile action from the ground." The statement said no injuries were reported.

In November, a shoulder-fired missile struck a DHL cargo plane at the airport, forcing it to make an emergency landing at the airport with its wing aflame. All three crew members were unhurt.

Last month, guerrillas hit a C-17 transport plane with a surface-to-air missile shortly after it took off from Baghdad, causing the engine to explode. The plane returned to the airport and landed safely, with only one of the 16 people aboard slightly injured.

Panel approves plans for apartment housing

BY MEGAN DAVIS

STAFF WRITER

Sophomore Patrick Elliot said he might have reconsidered signing a lease in December for off-campus housing had on-campus apartment-style residences been available to him.

Moving into a house on Green Street next fall will force Elliot to sacrifice the convenience of campus life for a little independence, but he said the benefits will be well worth it.

"Living on campus can definitely have its conveniences, but sometimes you just want to have a big place with better amenities," Elliot said. "You may be a little farther off campus, but you're more comfortable."

The UNC Buildings and Grounds Committee approved plans Thursday that could eventually give students such as Elliot the best of both worlds.

At the committee's preliminary design review, designers were given the go-ahead to continue work on the proposed \$65.5 million apartment-style housing project on South Campus, which is scheduled for completion in fall 2006.

The plans will be presented before the UNC Board of Trustees Jan. 21 for preliminary approval.

This shift in construction type marks an attempt to offer more attractive on-campus housing solutions to upperclassmen and graduate students, said Christopher Payne, director of housing and residential education.

The project initially was proposed for completion in 2005, but design plans were halted in November 2002 due to ongoing construction in the area.

The apartment neighborhoods will consist of five buildings in two South Campus locations — three



DTH/ASHLEY PITT

The proposed undergraduate student apartments will be located on South Campus, including this site near the Craige parking deck.

south of Craig Parking Deck and two south of Hinton James Residence Hall — with an estimated capacity of 960 students, if fully approved.

The apartment design would accommodate four students with two bathrooms, a living area and a kitchen. The apartments would be furnished in the same manner as other residence halls are.

Bruce Runberg, associate vice chancellor of planning and construction, stressed that there is still a significant amount of work to be done with the architectural design, which is being handled by the firms of Sasaki and Clark Nexsen.

Payne said he hopes this more independent living facility might lure academically focused students to remain on campus in their final years at UNC, becoming a positive influence for underclassmen.

For Elliot, cost and cars are his greatest concerns with the proposed apartment-style housing. Payne said that pricing structures

for the apartment units haven't been determined, but it's clear that no special parking privileges will be allotted to apartment residents.

Upon final approval for the project in March, contractor bids will be finalized in November and construction is scheduled to begin in December. From there, the units will be ready for occupancy by fall term 2006, Runberg said.

Students traveling through South Campus can expect the typical construction inconveniences such as dust and noise, Payne said.

Current construction on family-style housing on Mason Farm Road, which is scheduled for completion in 2005, will convert Odom Village to apartment-style housing for UNC students one year before the new sites.

Odom Village is now the site for graduate student family-style housing.

Contact the University editor at udesk@unc.edu.

SEARCH

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plete, the search committee will then narrow the list down to three final names and submit them to Provost Robert Shelton, who will make the final decision with Chancellor James Moeser, Richman said. The committee should make its selections by the end of this month.

The first public forum will spotlight Holden Thorp and will be held at noon Monday in the faculty lounge of the Morehead Building.

Thorp graduated from UNC with an undergraduate degree in 1986. He later received his Ph.D. from the California Institute of Technology and went on to do his post-doctoral work at Yale University.

Thorp has been a part of the UNC faculty since 1993.

Even though he is not part of the college's current administration, Thorp said his significant amount of experience at UNC and in working directly with students makes him qualified for the position.

"I've taught (Chemistry) 11 to thousands of students, and I have

a good idea of what the issues are."

Thorp emphasized that he wanted to focus on balancing UNC's role as a research institution with its mission as a public university by boosting the college's revenue.

"We need to build a consistent message internally to bring to the outside world," he said.

Information on each of the candidates can be found on the college's Web site at <http://artsandsci.unc.edu>.

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

FISH

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GloFish are the first genetically engineered animals ever sold as household pets, and these little fish are causing a ripple effect.

Despite research showing that GloFish are safe, many fish enthusiasts are upset about what they perceive as genetic tampering. Some pet stores are refusing to stock GloFish, which have been banned by the California Fish and Game Commission. California is also the only state to ban genetically engineered animals entirely.

"Through the years there have been a lot of fish bred for particular characteristics," Wienke said. "I don't think these are much different, it's just a faster process."

In the past, breeders have gone as far as injecting fish with dyes to obtain this type of color, a practice Wienke doesn't support, adding that GloFish are in their "natural state."

Others are not as sure. Jane Ellington, manager of Dubey's Pet World in Durham, says she won't make any decisions about the fish until she's done more research. "I've heard everything from good

reviews to, 'how dare they interfere with nature,'" she said.

Stephen Oakes, a spokesman for Yorktown Technology, said the company worked closely with bioethicists and researchers to ascertain that the GloFish were safe for the environment and that the public shouldn't be concerned. "They bring a lot of color to an aquarium environment," he said. "And they're a great tool to teach children about genetic engineering."

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LUNSFORD

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He also has been committed 15 times since 1992. One month before assaulting the UNC student, he checked himself into UNC Hospitals because he had thoughts about killing his cousin, Assistant District Attorney Kayley Taber said.

After staying at the hospital a few days, Taber said, Lunsford went to a mental health clinic. He was supposed to return two days later. "The next time we saw him, he was committing this assault," she said.

Lunsford also has a history of violence, and he was convicted of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill after stabbing his brother five times and repeatedly assaulting his mother, according to

reports.

Reports show that Lunsford also was convicted of assaulting a police officer in 1989.

Taber said Lunsford was reportedly living on the streets of Chapel Hill at the time he assaulted the UNC student.

Taber said the ruling was fair due to the "serious nature of the crime and the fact that he suffers from schizophrenia... and his own expert testified that he was dangerous."

"He is not criminally insane, which makes him more dangerous than others," she said.

Neither Assistant Public Defender Susan Seahorn nor Investigator Chris Upchurch were available for comment Wednesday and Thursday.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

REFORM

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only 31 dropouts last year, but was quick to add, "That's 31 too many."

On the other end of the academic spectrum, students and parents say they worry about the pressure produced by the competitive environment.

To reduce stress, the committee suggested requiring parental approval if students wish to take more than three Advanced Placement courses.

Although the report included many minor changes, Pedersen said, the final result would be dramatic. "We're talking about systemic reform," he said.

About 70 people, mostly parents, attended the presentation at East Chapel Hill High.

The school board will receive the recommendations and comments in March. It is scheduled to take action by the end of the 2003-04 academic year.

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