

BRIEFLY

10 UK troops killed: Ten British soldiers were killed and six wounded in the latest Gulf war fighting, a military spokesman in London said here, reports AFP.
No details of the circumstances were given. The latest casualties bring the total British losses to 16 dead, with 12 wounded.

Meanwhile, France suffered its first dead of the war when two commandos were blown up in an attack on an Iraqi fort on Tuesday afternoon.
Twenty-five other commandos were wounded in the assault, French officials said. They were members of the Gaget division, which comprises 9,000 French and 4,000 American troops, the location of the attack was not disclosed.

2 French soldiers killed: France suffered its first combat deaths in the Gulf war's ground campaign when two commandos were killed in an explosion inside Iraq, the Defense Ministry in Paris said Wednesday. Twenty-five troops were wounded in the blast, reports AP.

The explosion occurred Tuesday as a special unit of the French Daguet Division attempted to neutralize an Iraqi position, the Defense Ministry said in a communique.
The ministry did not specify the nature of the mission, where it occurred or whether it was successful. Among the victims was a colonel of the 1st Marine Infantry Parachute Regiment, who was seriously wounded, according to an armed forces spokesman.

The French radio network France-Info, citing witnesses, reported that the blast could have come from a mine or an explosive rigged by Iraqi troops.

US embassy in Kuwait soon: The Bush administration, acting quickly after the rout of Iraqi forces, may reopen its embassy in Kuwait as early as Thursday, the State Department in Washington said, reports AP.

The embassy was closed on Dec. 13 after Iraqi authorities permitted the last of the Americans detained in Kuwait to leave. State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said Wednesday the new US ambassador to Kuwait, Edward Gnehm, and a staff of several dozen aides were being sent to reclaim the embassy.

Gnehm and his US government colleagues have been stationed in Saudi Arabia, where the Kuwaiti government in exile has had its headquarters. Reporters in Kuwait City said the American flag was flying at the US Embassy, where Marines were back on station Wednesday, compound late Tuesday.

Two female troops killed: The first two female soldiers reported killed in the Gulf war were among the victims of an Iraqi Scud missile attack on a US barracks in Saudi Arabia, an Army officer and relatives said in Greensburg, Pennsylvania Wednesday, reports AP.

All told, US officials said, 28 Americans died and 100 were wounded in the attack Monday on the barracks near Dhahran. Names are made public only after families are contacted.

Spec. 4 Christine Mayes, 22, of Rochester Mills, and Spec. Beverly Clark, 23, of Armagh, died in the attack, according to relatives. They are the first American women reported killed in the fighting; both were from Indiana County, northeast of Pittsburgh.

Mayes was assigned to the 14th Quartermaster Detachment, a water purification unit based in Greensburg, and had gotten engaged to be married the day she left for the Gulf.

Iraqis surrender to TV crew: A group of Iraqi soldiers surrendered to an Italian television crew covering the allied ground offensive in Kuwait, reports AP.

State-run Rai-3 TV in Rome showed footage Wednesday of what appeared to be about a dozen Iraqi soldiers walking in the desert toward the camera with their hands up or waving white flags.

When they realized they were safe, the Iraqis smiled broadly, shouted Italia and enjoyed the water and biscuits offered them by their hosts.

The soldiers said they had walked about 30 kilometers (18 miles) in order to surrender. Rai said the journalists handed the Iraqis over to the Red Cross.

UK embassy opens: Britain said on Wednesday its Ambassador to Kuwait had left London and would reopen the British Embassy in Kuwait City today, reports Reuters.

The Foreign Office said Ambassador Michael Weston and Second Secretary Barry Lowen would arrive in the Saudi capital Riyadh before travelling on to Kuwait.

"They will reopen the embassy tomorrow (Thursday)," a Foreign Office spokesman said. Military personnel were checking the embassy for booby traps, he said.

Prime Minister John Major said earlier British troops were inside the British Embassy in Kuwait City.

Kuwait won't talk border: Kuwait will never negotiate border claims with Iraq even if President Saddam Hussein loses power, Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah al Ahmad al Sabah was quoted on Wednesday as saying, reports Reuters.

"Negotiate on what? There are no border problems because there is no change in the border in the first place," Sheikh Sabah told Egypt's weekly political review A-Mussawar in Cairo.

I would like to stress that there will be no negotiations with Iraq, whether with the current regime or with any future regime he said.

Last July Baghdad accused Kuwait of undermining its economy by overproducing oil and rewed claims to an oil field straddling their common border.

Sindh govt accused: Pakistan's former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto complained here Wednesday of increasing harassment of her party supporters by the government in the southern province of Sindh, reports AP.

The government has framed cases to keep us tied down and prevent us from voicing concerns of the people of Pakistan," she told reporters in Karachi as she left a special court where her husband and five others were being tried on kidnapping charges.

Ms. Bhutto said she was told by a young child that the administration was pressuring his family to give false statements against various imprisoned activists of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

Town renamed after Lenin: A Soviet town named after Vladimir Lenin has been renamed for the first time in the history of the Soviet Union, reports Reuters.

The official Tass news agency in Moscow on Wednesday said Parliament in the Central Asian Republic of Tadzhikistan had voted that the town of Lentinabad would revert to its former name of Khudzhand.

Deputies think that the change of name is just a step to restoring historical justice, and not an attempt to harm the memory of Lenin, Tass said.

Netherlands diplomat killed: Gunmen Wednesday shot and killed a Dutch diplomat in Tunisia less than two months after he returned from a stint in Baghdad, the Foreign Ministry in the Hague said, reports AP.

First Secretary Robert-Jan Akkerman, 40, was the last Dutch diplomat who served in the Iraqi capital before the Netherlands closed its embassy there, according to a Foreign Ministry spokesman.

Schwarzkopf says
Allied never intended to conquer Iraq

UNDATED, Feb 28: Here are the main points covered in Wednesday's briefing by Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, the Commander of Operation Desert Storm, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, reports AP.

"We were 150 miles from Baghdad (on Sunday) and there was nothing between us and Baghdad," said Schwarzkopf. The Allies never intended, or wanted, to conquer Iraq, he said.

"The war is not over," Schwarzkopf said. A battle continued to rage in eastern Iraq on Wednesday, he said, the result of two feints that apparently took the Iraqis by surprise.

"One feint was the threat of an amphibious assault on the Kuwaiti coast. It was a ruse, the General said, designed to force the Iraqis to concentrate their forces along the coast which they did.

The other ruse was a last-minute shift of vast numbers of allied soldiers from east to west, allowing them to drive deep into Iraq well west of the western flank of Iraqi forces.

The scale of the move inside Iraq was unprecedented in military history, he said, and it was undertaken only after the allies achieved air supremacy, depriving Iraq of its ability to see what was going on in Saudi Arabia.

The strategy allowed the Allies particularly French forces and the US 101st Airborne Division to strike deep into Iraq and outflank Saddam's Republican Guards, cutting off their route home to Baghdad.



Schwarzkopf said.

The General offered the following statistics: 79 Americans killed, 28 of them in the current ground campaign; 213 Americans wounded overall; more than 3,000 Iraqi tanks captured or destroyed, plus 1,857 armored vehicles and 2,140 artillery pieces; more than 50,000 Iraqis captured.

Another report on Initial Allied Troop Dispositions says: We made a very deliberate decision to align all of those

forces within the boundary looking north towards Kuwait... So we aligned those forces so it very much looked like they were all aligned directly on the Iraqi positions.

We also at that time had a very active naval presence out in the Gulf, and we made sure that everybody understood about that naval presence. It became very apparent to us early on that the Iraqis were quite concerned about an amphibious operation across the shores to liberate Kuwait. We continued our heavy operations out in the sea because we wanted the Iraqis to continue to believe that we were going to conduct a massive amphibious operation. On the Relative Strength of the Iraqi Army.

As far as fighting troops, we were really outnumbered two to one. In addition to that, they had about 4,700 tanks versus our 3,500 when the buildup was complete, and they had a great deal more artillery than we do. I think any student of military strategy would tell you that in order to attack a position, you should have a ratio of approximately three to one in favor of the attacker. And in order to attack a position that is heavily dug in and barricaded such as the one we had here, you should have a ratio of five to one.

On the Heavy Bombing of Iraqi Troops: Many people questioned why the extensive bombing campaign... It was necessary to reduce these forces down to a strength that made them weaker, particularly on the frontline barrier

that we had to go through... The nightmare scenario for all of us would have been to go through, get hung up... and then have the enemy artillery rain chemical weapons down on troops that were in a gully in the breach right there... Once we got through this and were moving, then it's a different war, then we're fighting our kind of war. Before we get through that, we're fighting their kind of war, and that's what we didn't want to have to do.

On Getting Around the Iraqi Army: We knew that he had very, very limited reconnaissance means. And therefore when we took out his air force, for all intents and purposes we took out his ability to see what we were doing down here in Saudi Arabia.

Saddam chairs Revolutionary Command Council meeting

NICOSIA, Feb 28: President Saddam Hussein on Wednesday chaired a meeting of the Iraqi leadership that expressed the hope that Moscow would be able to secure a ceasefire in the Gulf, state-run Baghdad Radio reported, says AFP.

The Revolutionary Command Council and the ruling Baath Party praised a speech Tuesday by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in which he said it would be "inadmissible" for the coalition to "exceed" its UN mandate in the Gulf.

The meeting "expressed the hope that the Soviet Union and other friendly countries in the (United Nations) Security Council will be able to take concrete measures to stop the United States and its Allies from pursuing their aggression against Iraq, its people and its Armed Forces," the radio said.

Iraq accepts all UN resolutions

NEW YORK, (United Nations), Feb 28: Iraq unconditionally accepts all 12 UN resolutions on the Gulf crisis, Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz said Wednesday in a letter to the United Nations, diplomatic sources said, reports AP.

According to a French-language translation of the letter originally written in Arabic, Iraq said it would comply fully with Resolution 660 demanding that it withdraw from Kuwait and with the other 11 resolutions, the sources said.

Raid signs with defiant rhetoric

AP from Nicosia adds: Iraq's state radio signed to Thursday with morale-boosting rhetoric, making no mention of US President George Bush's decision to halt offensive combat operations.

"This is Baghdad, the voice of dignity and pride, the voice of justice and force... From Baghdad, the graveyard of the criminal invaders, Good morning," a radio announcer said. Recitations from the Koran. Islam's holy book, followed.

Baghdad Radio signed on as usual at 5.30 a.m. Baghdad local time (0230 GMT), only a few minutes after Bush said in a televised address that the combat operations would stop if Iraq lays down its arms.

Bush said the suspension of combat operations depended on Iraqi forces not firing on coalition troops and not launching more Scud missiles.

He said the allied forces would implement a permanent cease-fire when Iraq releases all coalition prisoners of war, hostages of third-country nations, and the remains of all who have fallen.

The US president also said Baghdad must comply with all United Nations resolutions. Iraqi officials said earlier in the day that they are ready to comply with some but not all of them.

Iraq had said Wednesday it would accept two of the UN Security Council resolutions — 662 and 674 — and release prisoners of war if the allies halt their assaults.

Iran still seeks war reparation from Iraq

NICOSIA, Feb 28: Iran on Wednesday demanded that the United Nations implement its resolution calling for war reparations from the Iran-Iraq war, reports AP.

The call came after Iraq announced Wednesday that it would accept UN Security Council resolution 674, which calls for an assessment of damage to Kuwait and may force war reparations.

"It must not be forgotten that if Kuwait sustained damages and losses as a result of Iraqi aggression for seven months, for Iran it was eight years," the state-run Tehran Times newspaper said. "There must be no difference between resolutions 598 and 674."

Iraqi POWs top 50,000

DHAHRAN, Feb 28: Thousands of Iraqi prisoners poured into allied POW camps in Saudi Arabia on Wednesday. Many seemed relieved or even happy to be captured and off the battlefield, reports AP.

"Thank you, thank you," one smiling Iraqi said Wednesday to a member of the 82nd Airborne Division who searched him for weapons.

US Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of the allied coalition, said Wednesday the number of captured Iraqis had topped 50,000 and was still climbing.

Some Iraqis sought out allied forces to turn themselves in. Several kissed the hands of their captors, and a few even gave themselves up to journalists.

A US official described one instance in which an Iraqi tank and an armoured personnel carrier came upon a US humvee utility vehicle stuck in mud.

"They helped the humvee get out of the mud and then they surrendered," said the official, who requested anonymity.

Many of the POWs appeared ill-fed, poorly clothed and demoralized, according to numerous pool reports from Kuwait and Iraq.

One soldier told his captors that Iraqi soldiers had run out of food and water and had been looting homes in Kuwait. "God willing, Saddam will fall," said the young Iraqi reservist, who surrendered in southern Kuwait. "I... have a special message to Saddam Hussein: He should give up everything.

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Iran has claimed the war started with an Iraqi invasion in September 1980 but Iraq maintains that Iranian attacks preceded the invasion.

Off the Record

China a Pak pillar

BEIJING: China was a pillar of Pakistan's foreign policy, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said here Wednesday as he began his first talks with Chinese leaders, reports AFP.

Mr Sharif emerged from a closed-door meeting with his Chinese counterpart Li Peng saying that bilateral relations were all-weather and time-tested.

The friendship with China is a fundamental pillar of Pakistan's Foreign policy, he told reporters.

Mr Li said the talks were held in a candid and friendly atmosphere. Details of the talks were not immediately available.

The Pakistani leader was scheduled to meet later Wednesday with Chinese President Yang Shangkun and Communist Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin.

Mr Sharif arrived in China Tuesday for a four-day official visit aimed at increasing cooperation with China in industry, trade and technology. It is his first visit to China since taking office in November.

Too much soft?

MOGILEV: A soft drink created by Mogilev food specialists and scientists does not have a brand name yet, but its production will start in Mogilev in the summer of 1991, reports IAN.

Experts say that helps to get rid of nucleides in a human body, supposedly strontium and cesium.

More precious than life

COLOMBO: A middle-aged Sri-Lankan woman with 18 kilograms of gold has refused to leave Kuwait, for fear that desperate Iraqi soldiers may grab her valuable possession, a local press report today quoted official as saying, reports Xinhua.

Quoting returnees from Kuwait who had met the woman, a Foreign Ministry official said the woman had stocked food for three years and was living in a shelter on the outskirts of Kuwait city.

The official said that the woman who had worked as a domestic aide had told departing Sri Lankans that she would rather die under the bombs and the bullets than give up her gold treasure.

However, it was not known as to how the woman had acquired such a quantity of gold, the official added.

A total of 96,000 Sri Lankans registered in Kuwait before the outbreak of war, a large number of them are believed to have fled with their employers to other neighbouring countries. Kuwait are largely women who stay back for various reasons.

Schwarzkopf on Saddam

RIYADH: Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander of Operation Desert Storm, on Wednesday was asked his impression of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein as a military strategist, reports AP.

Hah, he answered with a small smile, drawing laughter from the Wednesday evening news briefing in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

"As far as Saddam Hussein being a great military strategist, he is neither a strategist, nor is he schooled in the operational art, nor is he a tactician, nor is he general, nor is he a soldier. Other than that, he's a great military man. I want you to know that," he said drawing more laughter.

Chances of peace wrecked: Mann

CHANDIGARH, India, Feb 28: Sikh Leader Simranjit Singh Mann said on Wednesday that killings by Indian security forces had wrecked any chance of talks to end a decade of separatist violence in Punjab, reports Reuters.

"The tyranny let loose by Delhi now has become unbearable," he told a news conference, denouncing the killing of six peasants mistaken for militants by Indian soldiers on Monday.

"Sikhs have to choose between liberty and death," Mann said, adding that he would call a meeting of his Akali Dal Party tomorrow (Friday) to discuss a more militant strategy.

"In view of what is happening, it is not worthwhile to have dialogue with the centre," he said.

Mann had met Indian Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar last December to demand self-determination for Sikhs and had cautiously welcomed the idea of further talks.

But this month five of the militant groups who have been battling for 10 years for a separate Sikh homeland of Khalistan—land of the pure—criticised Mann and said Shekhar could not deliver peace.

Nearly 800 people militants, policemen and civilians have died so far this year in the Punjab violence, according to police reports on Wednesday Indian news agencies reported at least 12 more deaths since Tuesday night.

Meanwhile the government announced compensation for the killing of the six farmers by soldiers, saying each family would get 50,000 rupees (2,700 dollars) and their village 100,000 rupees (5,400 dollars) for development work.

US Army destroys 700 Iraqi tanks

WASHINGTON, Feb 28: Three US armored divisions hammered the remnants of Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard on Wednesday in a series of fierce battles that destroyed more than 700 Iraqi tanks, US officials said. They predicted the elite Iraqi troops would collapse "within hours," reports AP.

US forces were "putting the Republican Guard out of business," Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, the US Gulf commander, said of the Iraqi units known as Saddam's best. He spoke at a briefing in the Saudi Arabian capital of Riyadh.

US military officials described the conflict — which raged west of Iraq's key military city of Basra — as the largest US tank battle since World War II.

The final conflict of the ground war "is mostly over," a senior US Defense Department official in Washington said Wednesday.

Another senior military official said the US armored drive against Saddam's elite troops had "fragmented" most of its eight divisions and destroyed its communication networks.

Another senior military officer said "mopping up" operations might be completed by morning.

Schwarzkopf called the engagement "a classic tank battle... fire and maneuver," he said "our forces are in the business of outflanking them" while "Iraqis are continuing to



KUWAIT CITY: Soldiers of the Kuwaiti resistance burst out in joy and hoist the Kuwaiti flag passing an abandoned T-62 Iraqi tank in Kuwait City liberated early Wednesday by coalition forces.