

REGION: The state holds its first smallpox inoculation training in Plainfield. **B1** SPORTS: The UConn women take on BC in a Sweet Sixteen game today. **D1**

# The Day

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## AMERICA AT WAR

# WAR TAKES DISTURBING TURN

### ADDITIONAL WAR COVERAGE

**The bombing of Baghdad** continued Saturday as U.S. officials disclose that three-quarters of allied bombing runs are dedicated to weakening Saddam Hussein's elite Republican Guard encampments. **A4**

**British army infantry** and tanks stage a brazen pre-dawn raid in the besieged southern Iraq city of Basra Saturday, destroying five tanks and blowing up two statues of Saddam Hussein. **A4**

**The Veterans Affairs** Department says the agency is better-prepared than ever to serve soldiers returning from the Persian Gulf. VA Secretary Anthony J. Principi thinks programs to clear up a current backlog of appointments will allow the agency to serve returning soldiers. **A5**

**As more missiles** rained down on Baghdad, residents were still seething over a bomb that hit a crowded marketplace on Friday, killing scores of civilians. **A6**

**In Saudi Arabia**, an enraged populace is trying to find ways to vent anti-American sentiments in a country where demonstrations are banned. Some send text messages ridiculing President George W. Bush, others glorify the bravery of the citizens and soldiers of Iraq. **A6**



■ An Iraqi man, whom the U.S. Marines say is a soldier dressed in civilian clothes, holds his hands up after being detained by U.S. marines from the 1st Civilian Affairs Group, a part of the 1st Tank Battalion, on a field near the road some 90 miles north of the town of Nassinya, Iraq, Saturday.

OLEG POPOV / NewsCom

## Iraq's Vice President Says Suicide Attack To Be First Of Many

By PATRICK E. TYLER  
New York Times News Service

Kuwait — A suicide bomber blew up his taxi Saturday and killed four U.S. soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division at a checkpoint near Najaf, as allied warplanes continued to pound targets in and around of Baghdad.

The planes also struck a meeting hall northeast of Basra in southern Iraq on Friday night where 200 Baath Party officials and forces loyal to Saddam Hussein were gathered.

The suicide attack Saturday was a disturbing new tactic for coalition military commanders in Iraq. It occurred just after noon, military officials said, as soldiers with the 1st Brigade of the 3rd Infantry Division sought to maintain tight control over a road into Najaf, where the division has been tied up since last Sunday trying to prevent Baghdad from sending reinforcements to irregular forces there.

As many as 1,000 Iraqi irregulars have been killed as they tried to disrupt the advance of the American troops who are supposed to strike a front-line Republican Guard division guarding the approach to Baghdad north of Najaf.

In Baghdad, Iraq's vice president, Taha Yassin Ramadan, identified the suicide bomber as a noncommissioned army officer, Ali Hammadi al-Namani, and promised more such attacks.

"Any method that stops or kills the enemy will be used," the vice president told a news conference. "What are they doing in our land? Let them pack and go."

See SUICIDE page A8

## Who's fighting by the rules?

Experts debate whether Iraq, U.S. are abiding by Geneva Conventions

By EILEEN McNAMARA  
Day Staff Writer

Cadet 1<sup>st</sup> Class Nathaniel Johnson raised a tantalizing question last week: How can the United States make such a fuss about Iraqi soldiers violating the rules of war when America was founded by colonists who ignored the combat rules of their era?

The answer came from Johnson's instructor in the maritime and international law class at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy.

People can debate whether American colonists, who used guerrilla warfare at a time when rigid formations of troops was the norm, violated acceptable warfare standards, said Lt.

See WAR page A9

## The Providence reloads supplies, weapons

By ROBERT A. HAMILTON  
Day Staff Writer

Aboard the USS Providence — After passing north through the Suez Canal this week, the Providence spent a couple of days submerged before surfacing just before midnight Friday, and making its final approach to the land under cover of darkness.

At full light the submarine slipped into port and made straight for the protection of the USS Emory S. Land, a 644-foot, 23,000-ton tender armed with machine guns and heavy weapons, with several small craft patrolling nearby.

On the Providence, sailors were elated to see

that most of the 1,300-sailor crew of the Land had "manned the rails," standing in dress uniforms along the decks to render honors to a returning warship.

As they pulled alongside they saw a banner that proclaimed "ESL Welcomes the Wolfpack Heroes." Informally, the submarines that had fired missiles from the Red Sea had started referring to themselves as the "Wolf Pack," a name that had apparently begun to spread.

But the Providence sailors had to cross the bow before they could see the detail, the dozens of handwritten notes from well-wishers that adorned the banner: "Good shooting," said

See RELOADING page A3

### DISPATCHES AT SEA

**Editor's Note:** Day reporter Robert Hamilton and photographer Tim Cook are aboard a Navy sub covering the war.



TIM COOK  
The Day

■ The USS Providence is moored alongside the submarine tender USS Emory S. Land while operating in the Eastern Mediterranean Saturday.

## One, two, three: High school class rankings on the way out

'The class rank system is pushing kids in a way that is not the best for their education.'

Betty Sternberg, associate commissioner of the state Department of Education

By JUDY BENSON  
Day Staff Writer

The method of ranking high school students by their grades and their course loads may soon be put on the dusty shelves of abandoned school traditions, along with peach-colored gym suits and reel-to-reel movies about the Soviet Union.

"Class rank may be headed down the road of obsolescence," said David Hawkins, director of public policy at the National Association for College Admission Counseling in Alexandria, Va.

Hawkins is among those noticing the steady increase among public high schools

across the country — now at 22 percent — that have decided to stop assigning students a number to indicate how each one fares compared with classmates. Most private and parochial schools do not rank, according to an association report. College admissions officials say class rank designations are no longer essential.

Along with class rank go the valedictorian and salutatorian designations, too, replaced by other forms of recognition for academic high-achievers. Some schools give special status at graduation to the 10 students with the highest-grade averages, but don't put them in rank order. Others grant equal kudos to the top 10 percent or 25 percent.

"The class rank system is pushing kids in a way that is not the best for their education," said Betty Sternberg, associate commissioner of the state Department of Education who recently headed a panel on improving high schools.

She recalled one valedictorian she interviewed who attributed her ranking to "learning to play the class rank game." Students place unwarranted importance on outdoing one another in class rank, Sternberg said, failing to realize that the difference between slots can be as statistically insignificant as one-tenth or one hundredth of a point, and that their future in college does not hang on whether they

See EDUCATORS page A11



KATE GARDINER / The Day

■ From left, Nathan Morello and Billy Griffin, president of student government, in the Tirrell Building at Norwich Free Academy March 7.

03 · 30 · 03  
Rhode Island's guitar royalty  
Duke Robillard keeps playing and producing and bringing the blues into the future.  
Daybreak



Region: New plan seeks to provide more water  
Perspective: Bold war claims lead to disappointment  
State: Connecticut to examine CRRA deal with Enron  
Travel: Up close and personal with a Florida manatee  
Marketplace: Spring forward with home fix-up help

### WEATHER TODAY

Winter rears its ugly head again as rain today turns to snow before ending after midnight. Clouds give way to partial sunshine on Monday. **D12**

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