Infantry patrol involved in skirmish with Iraqis

NORTHERN SAUDI ARA-BIA (AP) — A 1st Infantry Division patrol skirmished early Tuesday with an Iraqi reconnaissance patrol that at times acted as if it planned to surrender, unit officers said.

The 1st Infantry patrol played cat and mouse with the Iraqi patrol for about four hours before firing machine guns at the Iraqis, reportedly hitting at least one.

"We started to pick them up in ones and twos through our thermal sights," said Lt. Col. Skip Baker.

He said one patrol leader appeared to be holding a flag as if trying to attract the attention of U.S. soldiers to surrender.

But as the patrol advanced, it would periodically drop down into small ditches and disappear, then reappear elsewhere.

After repeated similar incidents and with the patrol still heading south. Baker said he decided the unit had given it ample opportunity to surrender.

"We fired them up," Baker

"We know we hit one, we could see a pool of blood in the thermal sights," said Capt. Rick Orth, 30, of Port Jefferson, N.Y.

Bill unfair to U.S. servicewomen

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Department officials said Tuesday that a bill to prevent the assignment of both military parents of young children to a war zone would turn American servicewomen into second-class military citizens.

"This legislation threatens to turn back the clock to the time when marriage and motherhood caused a discharge or discrimination in assignment," said Christopher Jehn, assistant secretary of defense for force management and personnel.

The comments by the Pentagon official came as a House Armed Services subcommittee examined several bills pending in Congress to limit or prohibit sending both parents or a single parent to a combat area.

The war in the Persian Gulf and the images of both parents leaving small children for service in the gulf prompted the introduction of numerous bills.

The Defense Department has said 16,300 sole-custody single parents, and 1,200 couples with children, have been deployed in Operation Desert Storm.

As the subcommittee on military personnel and compensation reviewed the issue, Defense

Secretary Dick Cheney, testifying elsewhere on Capitol Hill, reiterated his opposition to reversing a Pentagon policy allowing the military to simultaneously assign both parents of a small child to the war

"What we need from a military standpoint is the ability to deploy units, and we would have to begin discriminating against people based upon whether or not they have dependents of a certain age." Cheney told reporters after testifying before another House committee.

Earlier this month, in a letter to Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, D-Maine, Cheney said all members of the armed forces are volunteers who assume an obligation that they will be put in harm's way if called upon.

Among the bills reviewed by the House panel are a measure sponsored by Rep. Barbara Boxer. D-Calif., that would require the military to decide in time of war whether to send a mother or father of children under age 18 to a combat zone.

Boxer noted that in 1966, Cheney, then a father of young children, sought and received a deferment from the draft for the Vietnam War.





