

Troops battle insurgents near Baghdad

Insurgency displays military sophistication and planning; guerrillas inside Fallujah 'fighting to the death'

BY ROBERT H. REID
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — U.S. soldiers battled insurgents northeast of Baghdad on Monday in clashes that killed more than 50 people. Some guerrillas were said to be "fighting to the death" inside Fallujah, where American forces struggled to clear pockets of resistance.

At least five suicide car bombers targeted American troops elsewhere in volatile Sunni Muslim areas north and west of the capital, wounding at least nine Americans. Three of those bombings occurred nearly simultaneously in locations between Fallujah and the insurgent stronghold of Ramadi, the U.S. command said.

The zone between Fallujah and Ramadi was one of at least three areas Monday in which insurgents pulled

off almost-simultaneous attacks against U.S. or Iraqi forces, suggesting a level of military sophistication and planning not seen in the early months of the insurgency last year.

The worst fighting Monday took place about 35 miles northeast of Baghdad after assaults, at almost the same time, on police stations in Baqouba and its twin city, Buhriz.

Gunmen abducted police Col. Qasim Mohammed, took him to the Buhriz police station and threatened to kill him if police didn't surrender the station. When police refused, the gunmen tied the colonel's hands behind his back and shot him dead.

U.S. and Iraqi troops rushed to the scene, setting off a gun battle that killed 26 insurgents and five other Iraqi police, Iraqi officials said.

In one of the car bombings along

the Fallujah-Ramadi corridor, the attacker rammed into a Marine armored vehicle, wounding the four troops inside. The two other bombings caused no injuries, including one in which the driver rammed his car into a tank but his explosives failed.

Witnesses reported a fourth car bombing late Monday in Ramadi against a U.S. convoy, but there was no report of casualties.

In Mosul, where an uprising broke out last week in support of the Fallujah defenders, a suicide driver tried to ram his bomb-laden vehicle into a U.S. convoy, the military said. He missed but set off the explosives, wounding five soldiers.

In Baghdad after nightfall Monday, heavy explosions rocked the Green Zone, the barricaded neighborhood that houses the Iraqi government and U.S. Embassy. Loudspeakers warned, "Take cover, take cover."

During a news conference in Baghdad, Interior Minister Falah

Hassan al-Naqib, himself a Sunni, condemned the growing attacks on Iraqi police and security forces, calling them part of a campaign "to divide this country and thrust it into a civil war."

Prime Minister Ayad Allawi said police had arrested the leader of a militant group behind the killing of some foreign hostages. Moayad Ahmed Yasseen, leader of the group Muhammad's Army, was captured along with some of his followers, Allawi said. He did not say what kidnappings the group has been involved in.

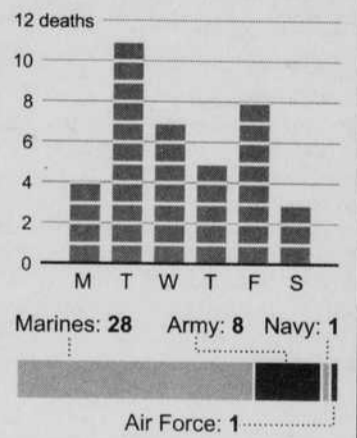
The spike in violence accompanied the American-led assault against Fallujah, 40 miles west of Baghdad. The week-old offensive in Fallujah has left at least 38 American troops and six Iraqi soldiers dead.

The number of U.S. troops wounded is now 320, though 134 have returned to duty. U.S. officials estimated more than 1,200 insurgents have been killed.

The Fallujah cost

The offensive in Fallujah, Iraq, has left at least 38 American troops dead. Securing the city was considered crucial in order for elections to go ahead as scheduled in January.

Casualties in Fallujah
Week beginning Monday, Nov. 8



SOURCE: AP research AP

Red Cross: Convoy unable to enter Fallujah due to fighting

Red Crescent convoy unable to enter general hospital in conflict zone

BY ALEXANDER G. HIGGINS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GENEVA — A relief convoy of ambulances and supplies was unable to enter Fallujah because of fighting in the city Monday, Red Crescent officials said.

Ahmed Rawi, the Baghdad spokesman for the International Committee of the Red Cross, said the Iraqi Red Crescent convoy of four ambulances and four trucks carrying supplies reached Fallujah General Hospital on the outskirts of the city, but was unable to go into the conflict zone.

Ismail al-Haqi, director of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, said he had decided it was too dangerous for the convoy to proceed.

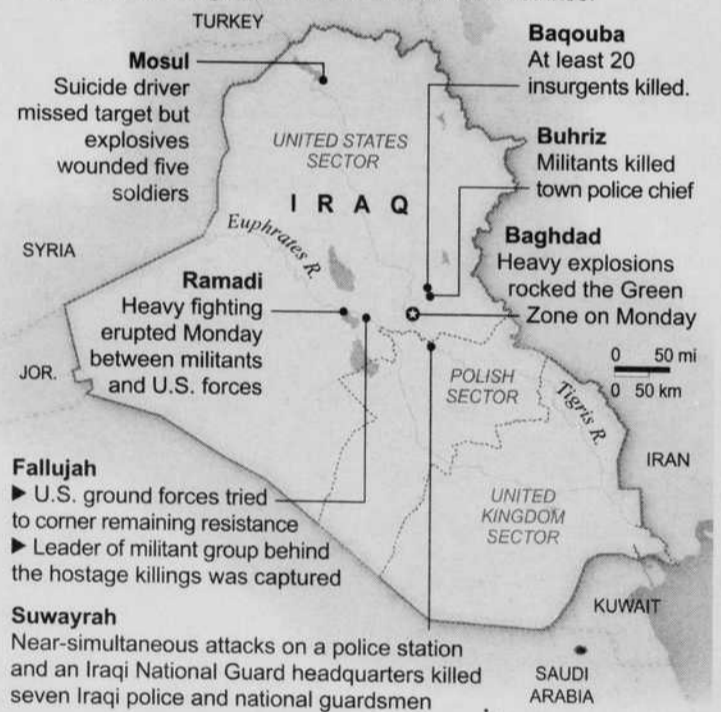
"I can't sacrifice the lives of the volunteers; it is very dangerous to go inside Fallujah now and we preferred not to enter," al-Haqi said.

He denied an earlier statement by the Red Crescent that U.S. forces and Iraqi officials turned back the convoy. The Red Crescent and Red Cross

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Fallujah inaccessible to relief agencies

A convoy of ambulances and relief supplies was forced to turn back from Fallujah, Iraq, on Monday as U.S. ground forces cornered remaining resistance and resumed airstrikes.



SOURCE: ESRI

AP

Marines view Fallujah's ruins, look at reconstruction needs

U.S. Marine engineers assess damages Monday; civil affairs specialist says destruction is overwhelming

BY EDWARD HARRIS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FALLUJAH, Iraq — U.S. Marine engineers began assessing damage in Fallujah on Monday, driving through tableaux of devastation as huge explosions shook the city and the belching whir of a U.S. warplane's machine guns sounded overhead while troops fought with holdout insurgents.

"It's incredible, the destruction. It's overwhelming," said Sgt. Todd Bowers, a Marine civil affairs specialist attached to the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment who is helping determine reconstruction needs. "My

first question is: Where to begin?"

Even before the assault on Fallujah, U.S. warplanes struck repeatedly at suspected insurgent strongholds and American forces opened their attack Nov. 8 with a heavy air and artillery bombardment that sent great plumes of smoke and fire over its neighborhoods.

A week of ground combat by Marines and some Iraqi troops, supported by tanks and attack helicopters, added to the destruction in a city where the homes and businesses for some 300,000 people are packed into an area a little less than two miles wide and a little more than that long.

Still, pinpoint targeting allowed U.S. forces to avoid the razing of whole neighborhoods, like that seen from combat during World War II. Many buildings that insurgents turned into strongpoints are now just piles of shattered concrete blocks and bricks. Nearby structures, separated by only a low wall and a few feet of grass, stand untouched.

The office of interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi said Monday that only about 200 buildings out of 17,000 in Fallujah sustained major damage.

Lesser damage is widespread. Streets are littered with fallen bricks, broken glass, toppled light poles, downed power lines, twisted traffic barriers and spent cartridges. Walls and security gates are laced

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