



Top Stories

World reacts to execution of Saddam Hussein

The execution of Saddam Hussein caused critical statements by governments from the world and also by non governmental organisations. The United States, Australia, Iran and some Polish politicians saw positive effects of the execution. George W. Bush said it was a "milestone" on the way to a democratic Iraq.

Bangkok hit with further New Year bomb blasts

More bombs went off just after midnight (0500 GMT) on New Year's Day in Bangkok, injuring eight people near a shopping mall where hours before a New Year's Eve countdown was cancelled due to a string of six bombings earlier in the evening.

Featured story

Ice shelf breaks free in Canadian Arctic

The Ayles ice shelf, which is the size of more than 11,000 football fields and is located just south of the North Pole, has broken free in the Canadian Arctic and scientists say that global warming has played a "major" role in the break.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Austrian Minister of the Interior Liese Prokop dies of aortic dissection.
- The world begins celebrations of the beginning of 2007, starting at

Wikipedia Current Events

10:00 UTC when midnight strikes in the Line Islands, Kiribati.

- Terrorists set off eight coordinated explosions killing two people and injuring 12 in Bangkok, Thailand. The government cancels Bangkok's New Year's Eve celebrations.
- War in Somalia: The Battle of Jilib erupts between the forces of the Ethiopian-backed Transitional Federal Government and the Islamic Courts Union.
- The number of U.S. military deaths in Iraq reaches 3,000 since the 2003 U.S invasion.

American military deaths in Iraq reach 3000

The Pentagon announced the death of US Army Spc. Dustin R. Donica on the last day of the year, bringing the number of US troop fatalities in Iraq since the onset of war in 2003 to 3000.

Donica, 22, was killed in small arms fire Thursday while serving in Baghdad.

In a statement from Donica's family, Dustin's father David Donica said, "Dustin had a tremendous sense of duty, both to his family, and his country. He will be missed by his family, and all those that knew him."

While 3000 is a small number compared to most other US military conflicts, this milestone highlights the growing sectarian violence in Iraq and the state of

coalition soldiers caught in the middle of it. The War in Iraq faces strong domestic opposition due to military fatalities, a financial cost of more than \$350 billion, widespread international opposition, and criticisms of the Bush administration's handling of the war.

"The most painful aspect of the presidency is the fact that I know my decisions have caused young men and women to lose their lives," said Bush in his final press conference of the year.

Donica, from Spring, Texas, was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Airborne Brigade Combat team, 25th Infantry Division in Fort Richardson, Alaska. Among his likes were soccer, rock and vocal trance music, and ham-and-pineapple pizza with Dr. Pepper.

Iowa falls to Texas in Alamo Bowl

The Iowa Hawkeyes (6-6) came into the Alamo Bowl as underdogs to the Texas Longhorns (10-3), 18th-ranked and defending national champions. It probably came as a surprise to the entire Alamo Bowl record crowd of 65,875 as Iowa ran out to a 14-0 lead in the first quarter. Iowa almost extended their lead to 21-3 just before the half, but for a touchdown pass called back for an illegal receiver who lined up on the Iowa line of scrimmage.

Texas quarterback Colt McCoy, who

began the season as a red-shirt freshman, capped the Texas comeback in the 3rd quarter with a 72-yard pass to tailback Jamaal Charles to take the lead at 20-14.

Tate connected again with Brodell to put Iowa back in the lead, 21-20. Brodell led the Hawks in offence with 6 receptions for 159 yards.

In the fourth quarter, Selvin Young capped a Texas drive by rushing 2 yards to make it 26-21, as the Longhorns failed to make the 2-point conversion. Iowa then marched downfield and Kyle Schlicher kicked a 38-yard field goal to pull Iowa within two points at 26-24 with 11 minutes left in the game.

With just a field goal needed and nearly five minutes to go, Iowa was given a gift when a short 19-yard punt put Iowa in possession near midfield. Iowa coach Kirk Fernetz then tried a bit of trickery which doomed Iowa's hopes. Texas safety Marcus Griffin tackled Dominique Douglas for a 9-yard loss on a reverse wide-receiver pass on first down. Iowa could not convert and had to punt three plays later, and Texas successfully ran out the clock to win the game.

Coach Ferentz immediately claimed the blame for the risky play call. "It's totally my fault. I'm sick over it," Ferentz said. "Guys competed that long and that hard and that put us in a bad situation."

Belgian peacekeepers wounded in Lebanon

Two Belgian soldiers, part of the UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon, were wounded Friday after stepping on a cluster bomb during a mine-clearing operation in southern Lebanon. One of the two soldiers stepped on a cluster bomb

while clearing a minefield near the village of Majdel Silim. Their injuries were "serious but not life-threatening", a UNIFIL spokesman said, however this was denied by the cabinet of the Belgian Minister of Defence, André Flahaut. One soldier was wounded at the neck, the second was wounded at the foot.

One of the deminers has already left the hospital and was repatriated to Belgium on Saturday. He was first transported to the military hospital at Neder-over-Heembeek, but was later allowed to return home. The other soldier was taken to the hospital of Saida for further examination. He will have to undergo surgery to stabilise his condition before he can be repatriated early next week, minister André Flahaut stated.

The wounded soldiers are part of the units from Meerdaal and Poelkappele, but their identities were not revealed.

There are 374 Belgian soldiers serving with the UN force, known as UNIFIL, stationed near Tibnin in southern Lebanon, 12 kilometers from the Israeli border. Their main tasks are demining, medical support and reconstruction.

French agency CNES to release UFO archives on the Internet

The French Space Agency will publish its UFO archive online by late January or mid-February. Most of the 6,000 reports have been filed by the public and airline professionals. Jacques Arnould, an official for the French Space Agency, said that the data had accumulated over a 30 year period and that they were often reported to the Gendarmerie. Often they are made to the Gendarmerie, which provides an

official witness statement ... and some come from airline pilots - Jacques Arnould

Bombings reported in Bangkok

At least seven bomb blasts occurred early on New Year's Eve in Bangkok. Two people were killed and dozens injured.

Four explosions went off almost simultaneously in different parts of Thailand's capital city, at around 6:00 p.m. local time (1100 GMT).

The first blast was in a bus-stop shelter at Victory Monument, which is a busy hub for public transportation. Another blast occurred nearby. Five people were injured, and one of them died later at a hospital.

Another fatal attack was in the Khlong Toei port district near the Na Ranong intersection, where a bomb hidden in a trash can near a Chinese spirit shrine exploded and injured seven people, one of them a 10-year-old girl. Another was a 61-year-old man who later died at a hospital. The blast caused a secondary explosion to some nearby cooking-gas cylinders.

Seventeen people were wounded in a blast at a police box near a Big C supermarket at the Saphan Kwai intersection. A witness there said a man dropped a grenade from a pedestrian bridge.

Another blast was at a police box on Sukhumvit Soi 62. There were no injuries.

A blast was reported at a police box in Nonthaburi Province on the northern outskirts of Bangkok. There was another explosion at a Tesco Lotus store in Prachachuen, while another was planted in a trash bin at Seacon Square, a shopping mall in suburban

Bangkok's Prawet district. A bomb squad was able to defuse the device without mishap.

Other suspicious packages are being investigated by police at locations throughout the capital, the iTV network in Thailand has reported. The New Year's countdown at CentralWorld was held at around 9:00 p.m. with police and Bangkok Governor Apirak Kosayothin then urging the thousands of gathered revelers to "go home and stay in peace."

The attacks are unprecedented in Bangkok. However, Thailand has had a turbulent year, with a coup d'état on September 19 in which the military ousted prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Since then, there have been a number of schools burnt by suspected Thaksin sympathizers in various parts of the country.

There is also the ongoing violence by Muslim separatists in the South Thailand insurgency, which has left 1,900 people dead since 2004.

It was not immediately clear if the bombings had anything to do with the coup or the southern insurgency.

Today in History

1801 - The Kingdom of Ireland merged with the Kingdom of Great Britain, adding St. Patrick's saltire to the Union Flag.

1818 - Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus, a novel by Mary Shelley, was first published in London.

1901 - The British colonies of New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia federated as the Commonwealth of Australia.

1959 - Cuban Revolution: President Fulgencio Batista of Cuba fled to the Dominican Republic as forces under Fidel Castro took control of Havana.

1999 - The euro, the official currency of the European Union, was introduced.

January 01 is New Year's Day.

Quote of the Day

I've known rivers:

I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

~ Langston Hughes ~

Word of the Day

saturnalia; n

1. A period or occasion of general license; a period of unrestrained revelry.

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