

SMOOTH SAILING
Plenty of sunshine today with highs in the upper 40s; clear and cold tonight.
Forecast, E10
50¢
\$2.40 per week by carrier

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RETURN FROM IRAQ



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / RUBEN W. PEREZ

Matthew Dias, 6, who had been holding a "HOME AT LAST" sign, runs out to the tarmac at Quonset Point to hug his father, Chief Warrant Officer Philip Dias, of Dartmouth, Mass., upon his return yesterday from duty in Iraq.

Home for the holidays

Company D, 126th Aviation, spent nearly a year at a military base about 40 miles north of Baghdad.

BY ELIZABETH GUDRAIS
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

NORTH KINGSTOWN — Thomas and Maryann Magnan will spend Thanksgiving at home.

Gene and JoAnn Lambrecht will go to New Hampshire.

Philip and Sandy Dias will spend the day at his parents' house.

The 16 members of the Rhode Island National Guard who returned yesterday each had a different plan for Thanksgiving Day. The important thing was that they were home.

The men, members of Company D, 126th Aviation, spent almost exactly a year in Balad, Iraq, at a large military base about 40 miles north of Baghdad. The unit flies C-23 Sherpa aircraft, a turboprop plane used to move food and supplies, to provide air drops of food and supplies to areas

without landing strips and to conduct medical evacuations. It's inherently dangerous work, because the planes fly relatively low.

While the unit suffered no casualties, it still had a tense and taxing year, said Lt. Col. Gene Lambrecht, the unit's commander. "It's not a pleasant place," Lambrecht, a full-time Guardsman who lives in North Kingstown, said yesterday. "It's kind of the Wild West."

The unit, which has 35 members in all, is headquartered in Rhode Island, but has detachments in Pennsylvania, Indiana and the U.S. Virgin Islands, with two aircraft assigned to each location. The members from the various locations hadn't trained together until they got to Fort Dix, N.J.

Though it was the first time in Iraq for this particular unit, such units are in high demand — there are only four others in the Army, Col. Christopher Callahan, state aviation officer for the Rhode Island Guard, said.

SEE **GUARD, A10**

Military favoring short-term boost of troops in Iraq

BY THOMAS E. RICKS
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon's closely guarded review of how to improve the situation in Iraq has outlined three basic options: send in more troops, shrink the force but stay longer, or pull out, according to senior defense officials.

Insiders have dubbed the options "Go Big," "Go Long" and "Go Home." The group conducting the review is likely to recommend a combination of a small, short-term increase in U.S. troops and a long-term commitment to stepped-up training and advising of Iraqi forces, the officials said.

The military's study, commissioned by

SEE **IRAQ, A10**

Court upholds ballot ruling

The state Supreme Court agrees that ballots rejected by machines during recounts must be photocopied.

BY BENJAMIN N. GEDAN
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — Laying the groundwork for manual inspections of ballots, the Rhode Island Supreme Court yesterday ordered the state Board of Elections to photocopy any ballot that cannot be read by voting machines during election recounts.

Until now, the machines have had the final word in Rhode Island, and rejected ballots have been set aside without debate or deliberation. Observers have been permitted to watch as ballots are inserted into a so-called Optech reader, but not to scrutinize the machine's findings.

Yesterday's ruling could dramatically alter election procedures. If candidates are permitted to examine photocopied ballots, the Board of Elections may find itself refereeing heated arguments about

SEE **RECOUNTS, A8**

Fractured state GOP mulls future

"It was just a bad year to be a Republican," says the party's state chairwoman.

BY SCOTT MACKAY
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — As their election rout of two weeks ago sinks in, Rhode Island Republican leaders are trying to figure out how to rebound at a time when their state party chairwoman, Patricia Morgan of West Warwick, says she would like to be reappointed to the post she has held for the past four years.

By tradition, Governor Carcieri — the only Republican statewide elected official who survived the Democratic tsunami of Nov. 7 — would make the decision on whether Morgan should stay or whether the GOP should turn elsewhere for leadership as it tries to rebound.

"Governor Carcieri very much appreciates everything Patricia Morgan has done over the last four years," said Jeff Neal, Carcieri's spokesman, yesterday.

SEE **GOP, A7**

Simpson interview, book deal canceled

The decision by News Corp., which owns the Fox network, follows intense criticism and boycott threats over *It Did It*.

BY BILL CARTER AND EDWARD WYATT
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Bowing to intense pressure both outside and inside the company, the News Corp. yesterday canceled its plans to publish a book and broadcast on the Fox network an interview with O.J. Simpson in which he was to give a hypothetical account of how he might have murdered his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend Ronald Goldman.

The company was responding to a week's worth of ferocious criticism that included threats of boycotts of advertisers who might sponsor the television broadcast on Fox, refusals by stations to carry the program, open opposition from television hosts such as Bill O'Reilly, on the Fox News Channel — which, like Fox, is owned by the News Corp. — and statements by stores that they might not stock the book, which was

SEE **SIMPSON, A11**

Man who killed brother given 2 years in jail



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / SANDOR BODO

Michael O'Connor, right, with his lawyer, Matthew Smith, awaits sentencing yesterday. He said to the judge, "If I could take my life to bring him back, I would not hesitate for a second."

Michael O'Connor stabbed his brother to death; yesterday his father told the court: "We want Michael returned to us...we cannot afford to lose another child."

BY MARK ARSENAULT
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — Facing justice for killing the big brother he called his "best friend," Michael O'Connor asked yesterday for the chance to salvage something of his life — the chance to be more than a prison inmate.

"If I could take my life to bring him back, I would not hesitate for a second," O'Connor told the judge, reading haltingly from notes. "All I can do is live a life Danny would be proud of."

O'Connor's brother, Daniel, died two years ago at age 37, after Mi-

chael stabbed him in the heart with a carving knife at their Cranston home. Michael, 30, had claimed his much larger brother had attacked him in an alcohol-fueled rage. O'Connor was originally indicted on a murder charge; in August he pleaded no contest to manslaughter.

He faced up to 30 years in prison. But with the O'Connor family begging the court for mercy — so that they would not lose two sons to a violent act — Superior Court Judge Mark A. Pfeiffer sentenced O'Connor to 20 years in prison, with two years to serve, and the remainder suspended with probation.

"There is no formula for doing this," Pfeiffer said from the bench, as he weighed the need for punishment and deterrence with the pleas of the family.

O'Connor must also undergo counseling for alcohol abuse and for

SEE **BROTHERS, A8**



INSIDE TODAY

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6 SECTIONS / 50 PAGES

Ask Army	F6	Lotteries	C4
Business	E1	Obituaries	D4
Classified	E4	People	F1
Comics	F7	Poker	F6
Crossword	F6	Rhode Island	B1
Editorial	B4	Sports	C1
Legal ads	E4	Television	F8
Lifebeat	F1	What's	
Local News	D1	Happening	F6

TIGHTER SECURITY AT TRAIN STATIONS

The federal Transportation Security Administration announces that it will start conducting sporadic patrols at the state's railroad stations looking for explosive devices. **B1**

HOLIDAY TRIP TO COST MORE

Just in time for that trip home for Thanksgiving, the price of gasoline in Rhode Island rises by 6 cents a gallon. **E1**

3 DIE IN SCHOOL BUS CRASH

A bus carrying high school students in Huntsville, Ala., smashes through a guardrail on an overpass and plunges 30 feet, killing three girls and injuring at least 30 others. **A2**



WHAT WOULD THE PILGRIMS THINK NOW?

"I think if the Pilgrims saw our Thanksgiving, their heads would explode," says the author of *Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community and War*. **F1**

C M Y K