

'Matrix' returns
The new and improved sequel is now showing.
Ticket, D1



Lakers fall
Three-time NBA champs ousted by Spurs.
Sports, C1



FRIDAY
MAY 16, 2003

Daily Press

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Chance of Showers
High 71°, low 57°-Details on B7

SEVING HAMPTON BRIDGE SINCE 1888

56c

Al-Qaida expected to lash out

Wounded, but dangerous

By Dana Priest and Dan Eggen
WASHINGTON

Al-Qaida-affiliated groups, their leadership severely weakened by 18 months of counterterrorism operations, are seeking to prove that their network is still viable by launching more attacks on U.S. interests abroad to capitalize on Monday's strike in Saudi Arabia, intelligence and terrorism officials said Thursday.

Some of the plans being detected by U.S. and foreign intelligence agencies appear to have been in the works for months, if not longer, but are being brought to fruition quickly, they said.

"They would like to do them all at the same time and have the whole world go up," explained one U.S. terrorism official. "This is a very bad patch."

U.S. counterterrorism experts are especially worried about the possibility of attacks against Americans and U.S. interests in Kenya and other parts of East Africa. Officials describe the volume of intelligence reports on potential threats there, including communications intercepts and tips, as similar to the amount of information collected in Saudi Arabia before Monday's attacks.

In some cases the bullets have already left the gun," said another intelligence official. On Thursday, the State Department issued a warning advising against travel to Kenya, and it has alerted Americans in recent days about possible terrorism attacks.

Inside

U.S. forces seize more than 200 prisoners, including one man on the most-wanted list of former Iraq officials. A16
Without U.S. military protection of mass graves, necessary evidence is being destroyed, group says. A17

LIVING with the UNKNOWN

Paula Menon, left, and Teri Barndtitz embrace at the site along Colonial Parkway where evidence about their mother's disappearance was found 15 years ago.

Grievous journey for answers in 1988 murder case lingers

By Judith Owens

It's been 15 years since the entire Halley family moved to the area. Fifteen, since Cassandra Halley, 18, and Richard Keith Call, 20, apparently stopped here on a first date, then vanished. Police believe they were victims of a crime spree.

Please see Mystery/A10

Yard to add partner benefits
Policy affects only salaried workers

By Peter Dujardin
DAILY PRESS

Northrop Grumman, Hampton Roads' largest private employer, plans to begin offering domestic-partner benefits next year to pay and lesbian employees and those involved in long-term heterosexual relationships.

Under the new policy, affecting 9,000 salaried workers at the company's Newport News shipyard, established gay and lesbian and heterosexual couples will qualify for medical, dental and vision care that have been only available to married spouses before. The new policy will not apply to life insurance, company officials said.

Northrop Grumman Newport News, the maker of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and submarines, said it likely would offer a similar deal to the yard's 1,000 hourly workers next year. The current contract with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America expires in June 2004.

"We want to hire the best employees available," explained Bob Bishop, a spokesman for Northrop Grumman in Los Angeles. "We benchmark our benefits against the industry and we strive to offer a competitive benefits package. We think this

Please see Barndtitz/A8

Drug could help drinkers kick habit

By Shondra Webster
THE HAMPSTEAD PRESS

A drug with a novel mechanism of action reduced the craving for alcohol among heavy drinkers and may help alcoholics quit or seriously reduce their drinking, researchers reported Thursday.

The medicine, nalmefene, which is marketed to control

withdrawal, was found to be effective in a trial with 150 volunteers conducted at the University of Texas in San Antonio, said lead investigator Bartko, Johnson, a psychiatrist.

"We think it's very significant," he said in an interview. In a comparison of those taking the drug with those getting

Please see Alcohol/A7



Abducted girl safe at home
For 3½ hours, mother lived worst nightmare

By Jenni McElroy
DAILY PRESS

Larry Dixon thought a whining stray cat was disturbing his early morning little devotion.

But when the Newport News man looked outside his open back door just after 5 a.m. Thursday, he was surprised to see a little girl whispering on the sidewalk leading to his doorstep.

Please see Girl/A7

That little girl was 18-month-old Savannah Branch.

Savannah was taken from her mother's home in the 800 block of 23rd Street about 1½ hours earlier. Police say four men, clad all in black with their faces covered, broke in, held a gun to Branch's uncle, demanded money and ransacked the home before taking the girl.

The intruders left a note threatening to dump the little girl into the James River if they didn't get \$20,000 in an hour, said Asper.

A SECTION INSIDE

Entertainer deaths
Actor Robert Stack, 84, and singer-songwriter June Carter Cash, 73, die. A2



Nonprofit planning to fight back
The National Cooperator is hiring lawyers and public relations companies to help head off an investigation. A3

Perfume war barely makes scents
Man claims his wife used so much perfume it almost killed her. She was arrested and charged. They are separated. A5

Not enough hospital space for SARS
Too little hospital space to deal with an emergency SARS outbreak is a "weak link" in the U.S. health system. A14

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