

A troop carrier refitted for Afghanistan's harsh terrain is being put through its paces at Aberdeen for a deployment that will shape the fight against a resurgent Taliban



LLOYD FOX/BALTIMORE SUN PHOTO

## Wheels of war

By Scott Calvert | [SCOTT.CALVERT@BALTIMORESUN.COM](mailto:SCOTT.CALVERT@BALTIMORESUN.COM)

As it rumbled down a steep hill at the Aberdeen Test Center, the huge armored troop carrier hit a bump and briefly caught air. Thanks to a modified suspension, the 22-ton truck did not land with a bone-jarring clatter. Instead, its knobby front tires seemed to glide back to the dirt road.

"That speed would almost definitely bend the axles on the original suspension," automotive engineer Adam Vittum shouted over the engine noise. "We would all be in a lot of pain and very possibly have broken something on the vehicle." No danger of that now, he noted, given the cushiony independent suspension. "It feels like nothing."

A comfier ride is one benefit of the \$160,000-per-vehicle retrofit. The main purpose, though, is to keep these Cougar vehicles rolling across rocky, hilly Afghanistan, where the U.S. military is stepping up its fight against a resurgent Taliban.

Testing of the nimble Cougar began, and continues, in Harford County. More than 90 years after Aberdeen Proving Ground's establishment, the facility is still helping the U.S. military prepare for battle. These days a big part of that mission is focused on Afghanistan, where roadside bombs are a growing threat.

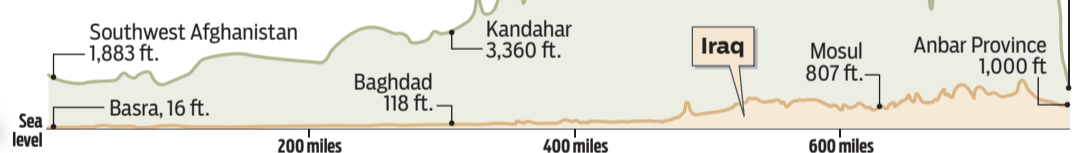
The test center, which is part of the sprawling proving ground complex northeast of Baltimore, has had a key role, for instance, in evaluating the Cougar's entire class of vehicles, known by the See **WAR**, page 10

### Iraq and Afghanistan: a tale of two terrains

The U.S. military is retrofitting armored troop carriers previously used in Iraq for deployment in the more punishing Afghanistan, a nation with a terrain that not only is far rockier and hillier but also has much greater variation in elevation.



Red lines on maps correspond to distances on elevation profile.



SOURCE: HeyWhatsThat.com

CHRISTINE SCHOENBERG/BALTIMORE SUN GRAPHIC

## Math gap hits many in Md.

Half of college-bound high school graduates take remedial classes

By Liz Bowie | [LIZ.BOWIE@BALTSUN.COM](mailto:LIZ.BOWIE@BALTSUN.COM)

Maryland's public schools are teaching mathematics in such a way that many graduates cannot be placed in entry-level college math classes because they do not have a grasp of the basics, according to education experts and professors.

College math professors say there is a gap between what is taught in the state's high schools and what is needed in college. Many schools have de-emphasized drilling students in basic math, such as multiplication and division, they say.

"We have hordes of students who come in and have forgotten their basic arithmetic," said Donna McKusick, dean for developmental education at the Community College of Baltimore County. College professors say students are taught too early to rely on calculators. "You say, 'What is seven times seven?' and they don't know," McKusick said.

Ninety-eight percent of Baltimore students signing up for classes at Baltimore City Community College had to pay for remedial classes to learn the material that should have been covered in high school. Across Maryland, 49 percent of the state's high school graduates take remedial classes in college before they can take classes for credit.

And the problem has been getting worse. The need for remedial math classes among Maryland high school graduates who had taken a college preparatory curriculum and went on to one of the state's two- or four-year colleges rose from 23 percent in 1997 to 32 percent in 2007, according to an Abell Foundation report released this spring.

While the problem is worse at community colleges, 15 percent of the freshmen at the University of Maryland, College Park must take a remedial math class before See **MATH**, page 13



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### SUMMARY OF THE NEWS

#### MARYLAND

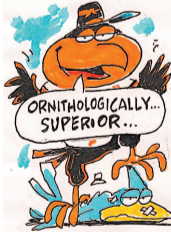
#### Once-a-week trash pickup starts in city

Residents will be limited to 96 gallons—or about three cans—of trash each week starting Monday under a program that reduces trash pickup from twice-weekly and increases recycling to once a week. **ARTICLE, LIST OF RULES, PG 3**

#### SPORTS

#### ORIOLES 4, BLUE JAYS 3

Melvin Mora ended the worst home run drought of his career in the bottom of the 12th, giving the O's their third win in four games. **SPORTS, PG 1**



#### TODAY'S WEATHER

PARTLY SUNNY

**86** | **62**  
HIGH | LOW



Showers possible Monday **PG 2**

## Their names cast a spell

But sharing one with 'Potter' characters is not magical for some in Maryland

By Mary Carole McCauley  
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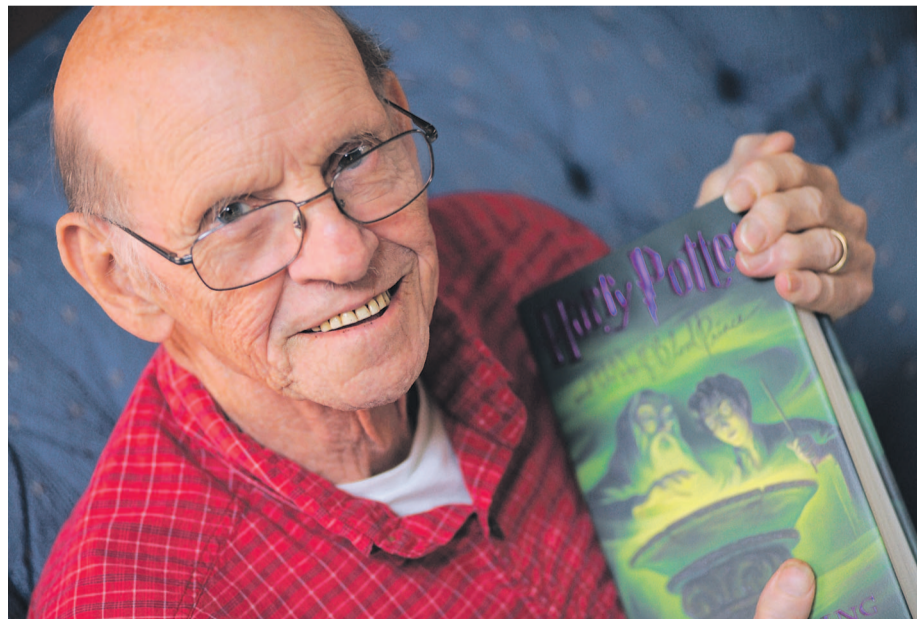
It isn't enough of a coincidence that he shares a name with the most famous literary character on the planet. He would have to have a scar on his forehead, starting between his eyes and snaking up his forehead in a line—just like the boy wizard created by J.K. Rowling.

"Oh my lordy Hammah," says the real-life Harry E. Potter, 76, of Leonardtown. "You have no idea what it is like to have this name. Just 15 minutes ago, I got a phone call from some girls who were about 13 or 14, and who giggled a lot. And you cannot be rude to them, you know that? You cannot be rude."

"That J.K. Rowling owes me something. I'm not sure what, but she owes me."

If having the same name as his fictitious counterpart has begun to weary Potter, you can't blame him. After all, the unsought attention has been going on for 12 years, since the first novel in the seven-book series was published.

See **POTTER**, page 10



KARL MERTON FERRON/BALTIMORE SUN PHOTO

"You have no idea what it is like to have this name," says Harry E. Potter, 76, of Leonardtown, shown with J.K. Rowling's "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince."

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