

Prince Harry in Iraq could raise troops' risk

'SPECULATIVE' REPORTS POINT TO SECURITY ISSUES

LONDON (AP) - He's a freckle-faced royal rascal who has led a life of privilege. But Britain's Prince Harry is also an army officer -- and he could soon be heading to Iraq to face the reality of combat.

No matter that royal officials have said no decision about a deployment has been made, or that the Ministry of Defense has dismissed such reports as "entirely speculative." Newspapers are filling their pages about the security headache that a war zone assignment for Harry -- who is third in line to the throne -- could bring for the British army.

Harry, 22, left Sandhurst military academy last year as a second lieutenant. At the time, the Defense Ministry said he could be deployed to Iraq but that there might be situations when the presence of a member of the royal family could increase the risk for his comrades.

Amyas Godfrey, an associate fellow at the Royal United Services Institute, a London think tank, said Harry could do a number of jobs in Iraq. As a junior officer, that might mean patrolling the streets of Basra, where Britain has about 7,500 soldiers, working inside the command headquarters, or training Iraqi police officers.