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Fernley soldier killed in Iraq attack

BY STEVE TIMKO • STIMKO@RGJ.COM • SEPTEMBER 11, 2009

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A U.S. soldier who grew up in Carson City and Fernley was among three military police officers killed Tuesday in Iraq when their convoy was attacked, his mother said Thursday.

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Pfc. Thomas F. Lyons, 20, was in a convoy in Baji, Iraq, when the truck was hit with a kind of bomb that becomes a projectile when detonated, said Jeanna Flint of Fernley.

"It was quick, fast, sudden. No pain," Flint said.

Lyons and his colleagues were serving north of Baghdad and assigned to the 545th Military Police Co. of the Arctic Military Police Battalion based at Fort Richardson, Alaska.

His wife, Delvin, also is an active-duty soldier stationed there and gave birth to the couple's first son in May.

Fernley roots

Lyons attended Fernley High School and obtained his GED diploma in Reno before joining the Army on Nov. 23, 2007, his mother said. He had several siblings, including a twin sister.

"His brother-in-law had enlisted and encouraged him," Flint said.

He tried several sports, including wrestling and football, at Fernley High School and played soccer before high school.

"He was just trying to find his niche," Flint said. "And I think he found it as an M.P. He wanted to be a police officer. He finally had a goal in his life."

It's not clear if he would have come back to Nevada to be a police officer after he finished his military service, gone to Georgia, where his wife grew up, or if they would have picked some place in between, she said.

Flint said her son respected people.

"One person told me the girls liked him because he didn't try anything with them," Flint said. "He was just friends with them, and they had a good time."

Lyons' body will arrive Monday in Nevada. Flint said she is finalizing funeral arrangements.

Also killed in the attack were Staff Sgt. Shannon M. Smith, 31, of Marion, Ohio; and Pfc. Zaachery T. Myers, 21, of Delaware, Ohio.

Families have been notified.

A ceremony of prayer and remembrance will be scheduled at Fort Richardson.

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Lyons arrived in Alaska in May 2008. He and the others were deployed to Iraq in May.

The deaths were the first for the company and among 22 this year for U.S. Army Alaska, officials said.

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My condolences to the family of Pfc. Thomas F. Lyons. I want to make the family aware of the services of Bugles Across America, a non profit organization that provides buglers to plan Taps at the funerals of service members. These buglers are all volunteers and would be honored to serve this soldiers memory at his funeral. They have buglers all over the U.S. and you can reach the reservation system by contacting Tom Day at buglesacrossamerica.org. Our thoughts are with you.

Fred Speckmann

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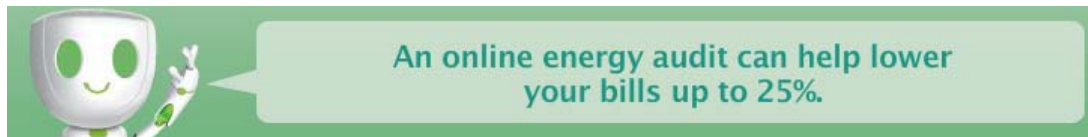
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