

THE DIAMOND EVENT
AT
Montelongo's
Fine Jewelry



Come visit us April 16th & 17th
for our first annual
**Montelongo's Fine Jewelry
Diamond Event!**

- Best prices of the year on all loose diamonds over 0.50ct
- 30% off all diamond jewelry in stock
- Register to win an A.Jaffe[®] mounting, valued at \$2,000!

Montelongo's Fine Jewelry...
The New Definition of Romance!

505 E. University Dr., Ste. 305
979-691-2019

Friday, April 16th, 10 - 7
Saturday, April 17th, 10 - 6

www.montelongos.com

'They're almost home

Family of soldier killed in Iraq pleads to keep her two sisters from being sent back

By James A. Carlson
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW BERLIN, Wis. — With three daughters serving in Iraq, John and Lori Witmer had a family Web site with photos from Baghdad, notes to home and messages of encouragement.

"Keep praying! They're almost home!" a recent entry says.

The top notice, dated Sunday, carried grim news: "We regret to inform you that Michelle Witmer was killed in action April 9th"

The 20-year-old private died when her Humvee was ambushed in Baghdad, making her the first woman in the Wisconsin National Guard to die in combat.

Her family is asking the military to stop her sisters from being sent back to Iraq after this week's funeral.

"I can't live another year like I've lived this one," John Witmer told The Associated Press. "The sacrifice that this family's made can never be understood by someone who hasn't gone through it... It's a burden I can't bear. My family can't bear it."

The sisters arrived home Monday morning, two days before Michelle's funeral, and indicated they would need a week to mull over their options, he said. "In the end, it is going to be my girls' decision."

Michelle's 24-year-old sister, Rachel, served in the same unit, the 32nd Military Police Company, which was expected to leave Iraq shortly but just had its duty extended 120 days.

Charity Witmer, Michelle's twin, was sent to Iraq late last year as a medic with Company B of the Wisconsin Guard's 118th Medical Battalion. The Witmers also have two sons.

Army spokesman Lt. Col. Kevin Curry said Defense Department policy states that if a soldier dies while serving in a hostile area, other soldiers of the same family are exempt from serving in a hostile area if they request. The request must come from the soldiers themselves.

John Witmer acknowledged the final decision of whether to return will be up to his daughters. But he said they would have to understand "how terribly we need to know they're not going back."

Witmer said he worried about his daughters joining the military but felt at the time that duty with the National Guard would be relatively safe, especially with a military police unit.

"My daughters wanted the freedom of being able to call their shots with their education," he said. "They were using that to go to school."

Asked on NBC's "Today" whether U.S. actions in Iraq were justified, Witmer said it was a difficult issue to sort out, but he recalled daughter Michelle's comments.

"She felt that she had made a difference in that culture and that there was a liberation that went on," he said. "She was also very concerned that if we had a knee-jerk reaction to some of these horrible things that were happening, that thousands of Iraqi people would suffer from a swift exit."

Jan Pretzel, the sisters' grandmother, told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel that by February, Michelle had an inkling her unit might soon be out of Iraq because members were told to tell their families to stop shipping packages.

"This is a REALLY GOOD SIGN!" she wrote in an e-mail. "The redeployment process (though it may be long) is finally beginning!"

"I can't live another year like I've lived this one. The sacrifice that this family's made can never be understood by someone who hasn't gone through it... It's a burden I can't bear. My family can't bear it."

— John Witmer
father of 20-year-old
Michelle Witmer, killed in
action in Baghdad

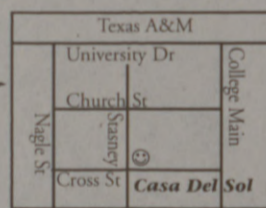
Why bother with parking when you can walk to TAMU?

- New LOWER prices
- Only 2 blocks from TAMU
- Now preleasing for summer/fall

Casa Del Sol
696-3455

Lease before April 15, 2004 and receive \$100 OFF 1st months rent, no app fee, and a chance to win a 27" color t.v.

aggie.inn@verizon.net



Need a Tutor?

Aggietutor.com has good, helpful tutors for all courses.

One-on-one, personal tutoring at reasonable prices.

www.aggietutor.com

THE BATTALION Classified Advertising

- Easy
- Affordable
- Effective

For information, call **845-0569**

Settle in at
The Colony APARTMENTS

- Floor Plans
- Swimming Pool
- Computer Lounge
- Hot Tub
- Lighted Tennis/Basketball Courts
- Sand Volleyball Courts
- On-Site Laundry Facilities
- Fully Furnished Club Room
- TAMU Shuttle Stops on Property
- Free 24/7 Fitness Center Membership
- Free Bus Stop Breakfast every Wednesday

STUDIO, ONE BEDROOM AND TWO BEDROOM UNITS AVAILABLE!
1101 Southwest Parkway, College Station
www.bcskinc.com

1-3 P.M. Wednesday Rudder Fountain

Meet The Battalion

Meet the writers, photographers, artists and editors who produce your campus newspaper.

THE BATTALION