

## Joy jump



Evan O'Connell • THE BATTALION

Three-year-old **Thea Miller**, of College Station, plays inside an air castle Sunday evening near the George Bush Presidential Library. The College Station Noon

Lions Club sponsored the festivities by providing three air castles, a petting zoo and free watermelon for children.

## Family of Lebanese-born Marine continues tense wait for news

By Paul Foy  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WEST JORDAN, Utah — Amid new evidence he may be alive, relatives of abducted U.S. Marine Cpl. Wassef Ali Hassoun said they hoped he has been released following conflicting reports of his fate.

In a statement sent to Al-Jazeera television, the group calling itself "Islamic Response," said Monday that Hassoun was safe at an undisclosed location. The statement also claimed that Hassoun had promised not to return to the American military.

"At this point we are uncertain about the destiny of our brother, our son, our friend, Wassef," Tarek Nosseir, a family spokesman, said Monday.

"We pray that the news of his safe release is true. If he is still in captivity, we remind the captors of the saying of our beloved prophet: Be merciful to those on earth, mercy will descend upon you from heaven," Nosseir said in front of the family's home in West Jordan.

Nosseir would not say why the family thought Hassoun may have been released.

The statement Monday was issued in the name of the same group that claimed initial responsibility on the June 27 video for the kidnapping. The group calls itself "Islamic Response," the security wing of the "National Islamic Resistance — 1920

Revolution Brigades." The name refers to the uprising against the British after World War I.

Hassoun's family has been in seclusion since Saturday, when a militant group calling itself the Ansar al-Sunna Army claimed on a Web site that it had beheaded the 24-year-old Marine, adding it would release video backing up that assertion.

But the group said Sunday it did not issue the statement, leaving it unclear if the Hassoun was killed by another group or was still alive. A posting on another Internet site said Hassoun was alive.

The National News Agency in Lebanon reported the death Sunday, citing the Foreign Ministry, which was informed by Lebanon's charge d'affaires in Baghdad. The agency did not say how Hassoun's death had been confirmed.

The U.S. military in Baghdad said it was checking into the claim but had no confirmation.

Hassoun, educated at American schools in his native Lebanon before moving to the Salt Lake City area, was serving his second stint in Iraq as a translator fluent in Arabic, French and English, when he disappeared June 20.

Hassoun's father, Ali Hassoun, who lives in Tripoli, Lebanon, repeatedly pleaded for his son's release. He and his other sons have contacted politicians and Muslim clerics in Lebanon and Islamist groups in Iraq in hopes of securing the Marine's release.

## U.S. airstrike in Fallujah kills 10

By Danica Kirka  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — U.S. jets attacked a house in the turbulent city of Fallujah on Monday, killing at least 10 people, officials said. The U.S. military had no immediate comment.

The interim prime minister said he would not interfere with an Iraqi tribunal's right to decide whether Saddam Hussein and his top lieutenants should be executed on war crimes

charges, the Arab language television station Al-Arabiya reported.

Ambulances raced to the eastern side of Fallujah, where U.S. airstrikes have frequently targeted safe-houses used by members belonging to the network of Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Rescue workers picked up remains of the dead, witnesses said.

"U.S. jets shelled a residential house in the al-Shuhdaa neighborhood in Fallujah," said police Capt. Mekky Hussein al-Zaidan.

Dr. Diaa Jumaili of Fallujah Hospital said 10 bodies had arrived there, most of them dismembered.

U.S. forces have hit the area with four airstrikes since June 19, killing dozens. Al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian militant said to be connected to al-Qaida, is believed to be behind a series of coordinated attacks on police and security forces that killed 100 people only days before U.S. forces handed over power to an Iraqi interim government June 28.

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