

Galva, IL

Galva man injured in Iraq

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GALVA, Ill. (AP) -- A Galva woman says her 20-year-old son was injured while serving in Iraq.

Tami Siemers says her son Lucas was injured while on traffic patrol with the Battery F, 202nd Air Defense Artillery Unit, based out of Galva, about 50 miles north of Peoria. She says he was one of five soldiers wounded in the incident.

Siemers says her son called Tuesday from the hospital, and had recovered enough by yesterday to return to his unit.

She says her son told her that soldiers were directing traffic around a stopped car when another vehicle exploded about 25 feet away.

A National Guard spokesman confirmed the injuries, but declined to release more information.

The unit was deployed in November 2003. It arrived in Iraq in March and its scheduled to return home in March 2005.

Sleepless night at the Galva armory as families concerned families await word

GALVA -- Quad City area soldiers find themselves in the line of fire. Five members of the 202 Air Defense Artillery Unit from Galva recover from injuries.

Staff Sergeant Martin Gibson knows all of the wounded soldiers, which makes his job here at the armory even more difficult.

After a sleepless Tuesday night in the Galva armory, Staff Sergeant Martin Gibson is back on the job--a job that runs 24 hours a day, five days a week. In the office where he keeps an army cot

"I can tell you your soldier is fine," he tells an incoming caller.

Wednesday is tougher than most, dealing with five wounded soldiers in the 202nd.

"I was receiving phone calls all night and this morning from families," says SSgt. Gibson, "And reassuring families about their soldiers."

Nearly a year ago the part-time soldiers from across Illinois called to serve full time in Iraq leaving friends and families on the 18-month mission. Five soldiers injured while serving on traffic duty, one of which sustained serious injuries, in a Baghdad explosion.

"When you watch it in the news or read it in the paper, you think about the boys from Galva and it crosses your mind it could be one of them," says Gibson.

In his civilian life, Staff Sergeant Gibson is an industrial electrician for Oscar Mayer in Davenport. These days, however, he fills a variety of rolls at the Galva armory.

The care packages will wait for another day, as it is a time for feelings and family.

"It's now close to home, so they will be undoubtedly taking a lot," says Gibson. "It affects me deeply."

As the sun shines on the Armory, reflections on a conflict that continues.

This isn't the first time that soldiers from the 202nd have suffered injuries. There have been a total of eleven injuries in Iraq, and two of those soldiers were sent home.

Not including this latest incident, the Illinois National Guard counts nine deaths and 52 wounded soldiers in the war in Iraq.