Family claims deception in death of Pat Tillman

Friendy fire killed former NFL star; parents say Pentagon covering up mistakes

BY DAVID JONES

SPERA, Afghanistan — Pat Tillman died in the dark between two black buildings, huddled up a canyon wall, just below the most famous hill of Ranger 3. To Joni Tillman, he was just another American soldier. But millions of people worldwide and the death of this man, who gave up a lucrative professional football contract to fight for his country, was an American tragedy.

At first, Pentagon officials said Tillman was killed by enemy fire. A month later, they said it was friendly fire, triggered by enemy ambush.

Today, more than seven months after Tillman died, even that Pentagon conclusion is contradicted by allegations who were there.

Pat Tillman left a lucrative pro football career to serve in the Army. He died April 22, 2004.

Inside today

A penalty shot by Trinity Valley graduate Annie Blatter helped Net Dame win a national soccer championship. Page 1C

There's a business buzz along Truich Boulevard, thanks to roadwork and tax incentives. Page 10C

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Countdown

19 days until Christmas

Names: Mollie Greiner
Age: 4
Tracy, Yakima Parents: Greg and Melissa Greiner
How does Santa decide if you're naughty or nice?

There won't be much sun today

There will be a mix of sun and rain in the area. Page 2A.

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Attacks intensify in Iraq

Three-day death toll at 70 as Iraqis working with Americans appear to be targets

BY NICK MULHAN

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Gunmen ambushed a U.S. convoy near Tikrit on Sun-

day, killing 17 and raising the toll from three days of unclaimed massacres and attacks to at least 70 U.S. dead and dozens wounded.

The attack, focused in Bagh-
dad and several cities in the north, appeared to be aimed at scaring off those who cooperate with the American military — whether police, national guardsmen, or ordi-

nary people just looking for a pay-

check.

The violence came just weeks after the United States launched major offensives aimed at sup-
erressing guerrillas ahead of cru-

cial elections set for Jan. 30. Lat-
	er Sunday, scores of militants still held onto Tikrit, the last remaining po-

tential Sunni strongholds in demanding that the U.S. leave in six months.

Saddam's bloody began when gunmen opened fire at the bus as it was dropped off a re-

played by coalition forces (at a weapons dump in Tikrit), 80 miles north of Baghdad, said Capt. Bill Coppernoll, spokesman for the 1st Infantry Division, which controls Tikrit. Coppernoll said 17 U.S. died and 12 were injured in the at-

tack.

Survivors said about seven guerrillas were involved, empir-

ing their clips into the bus before dis-

lucing the bodies of the victims were brought to a morgue too small to hold them all; some were left in the streets.

The violence also occurred

Sunday, guerrillas am-

Tikrit-based U.S. 1st Infantry Di-

ployed by coalition forces at a

were brought to a morgue too

race.

whether police,

whether police, national

American.

media.

likely.

Tillman

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Apple farms benefit many
Orchards are a source of pride for entire villages

HAO JIA ZHANG, China — This hasn’t been the best year for orchards, explains farmer Hao Tong You as he sets down a small bag of apples he’s just picked.

A hard frost struck in April, cutting back the number of apples. This came on top of problems with drainage, which damaged the fruit’s appearance.

Like everyone, farmers here are on the mercy of forces beyond their control: weather, water, labor supply, government regulations and the pressure of distant markets.

Still, there are real differences in the way apples are grown in the United States and China. Large Chinese orchards look different, but more importantly they rely on a remarkably intensive hands-on process.

The average worker picks more than four hundred pounds a day. He selects each apple, leaving smaller, paler ones to be harvested when they’re larger and redder.

The apples are washed, then placed in a basket for the trip to the market. And these are only the final steps in a long, labor-intensive journey to be harvested.

Orchards may appear vast from the roadside, but most are divided into tiny, individually managed plots. They are Japanese Fuji, which the government considers the best variety, and Japanese Shinko, which the government says has the best taste.

Apple family grosses $3,658 annually, while area farming communities estimates the average apple family grosses $3,917 annually, while spending about $800 on such things as pesticides, fertilizer and paper bags.

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Apple trees are terraced around Yantai, the principle apple-exporting area in China. A benefit of terracing is that it allows them to keep them fresh to eat throughout the winter.

Apple trees are harvested when they’re larger and redder. He snips each stem to prevent cutting or bruising other apples in storage. Each fruit is slipped into a protective nylon sock. Only the orchard’s manager takes a leaf in his hand. While not boasting, there’s obvious pride in his voice.

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EIDOUYA, China — Reaching this village of 300 families in the hills south of Yantai requires negotiating miles of narrow, bone-jarring dirt roads.

But during the two months when apples are harvested from the terraced slopes above the village, a handful of apple buyers risk shock absorbers and mufflers to get here.

The village is hundreds of years old. Except for the power lines and television antennas, it seems to have changed little over time. Thick piles of corn dry atop the village’s tiled rooftops. Old stone wheels once used to grind the corn into meal lay abandoned and half-buried along the roads.

Cars are rare. The few streets are narrow, unpaved and often steep.

And apples are everywhere. They’re rolled down the hills in wheelbarrows or atop small three-wheeled tractors. They’re piled up in alleys and sheds, and being buried in shallow pits for the coming winter.

In ancient courtyards, families squat amid mounds of apples, sorting and grading the fruit.

It’s quiet, except for the thwacking sound of women washing clothes in a nearby stream.

The village is an anomaly for northern Shandong Province, where most orchards grow on gently rolling plains.

Beidouya is more akin to villages in the interior province of Shaanxi, a more rugged area and the nation’s second largest apple-growing region. As such, Beidouya is both blessed and cursed.

The terraced slopes on the surrounding hills mean better exposure to sunlight than apples grown in the thicket-like orchards of the flatlands.

The hills also get less rain. While parts of the Shandong Province crop were hurt by too much rainfall this summer, here water comes from controlled flows of ditch irrigation.

Finally, the higher elevation means cooler fall nights.

The combination of sunlight, water and temperatures means better color and texture for the fruit.

But the same elements that help create a superior apple cause other problems.

The village is only about six miles from a world-class, six-lane highway leading to the international port cities of Yantai and Qingdao. But by the time apples reach that highway, they will have bounced over miles of rough back-country roads and risked significant bruising. It’s not a chance exporters who deal in the higher-valued premium apples will bother taking.

“The apples here are real nice. I just don’t want to buy them because the roads are so bad that the apples get all bruised,” said a buyer from Yantai.

Beidouya’s dilemma is similar to a large part of Shaanxi Province, where many orchards grow in arid hills served by few good roads.

The consistent high quality of Shaanxi’s apples makes many consider the region the future of China’s apple industry. That’s creating pressure for better roads despite the higher cost of building in rugged terrain.

Apples are Beidouya’s only commercial crop. But with limited funds of its own, few think the village will be getting a paved road any time soon.

Comparing farm costs

■ Average number of hours worked in an acre of Washington state orchard per year: 200 hours
■ Average number of hours worked in an acre of Chinese orchard per year: 1,347 hours
■ Average number of hours worked for orchard work in China: 28 cents

Source: Jim Du Bruille of Wenatchee Valley College

Farmer Ding Shan Zhen is framed by a bedroom door adjacent to the kitchen in the home he shares with his wife, Qi Xiang Mei. The only water supply to the house is a small faucet that empties into a barrel in the kitchen.
By DAVID ZUCCHINO

Command said the investigation into the Army Special Operations case of the scene knew right away that the Rangers were not the ones who fired on Pat Tillman. They were there the night of April 22. At an April 26 press conference, military legal officers are reviewing the investigative report and other documents, has not been fulfilled. A Freedom of Information Act request filed July 6 by insurgents who had ambushed a patrol the night of April 22.

Lawmakers want vote on intelligence overhaul

WASHINGTON — A House GOP leadership deal would allow a vote on Sept. 11 legislation overhauling the nation’s intelligence community. It would easily pass, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle predicted Sunday. An all-Republican subcommittee warned the Pentagon was stonewalled their attempts to find out how their son died. They say there is no evidence that insurgents opened fire on Tillman’s Ranger platoon. Tillman’s parents say the military has deceived them and cover up deadly mistakes and negligence that night.

On Friday, a spokesman for U.S. Central Command said he was killed by friendly fire, triggered by an enemy roadside bomb — and fired wildly at Tillman and other Rangers. They say there is no evidence that insurgents opened fire on Tillman’s Ranger platoon.

Mary Tillman accused the military of burning her son’s uniform and documents, has not been fulfilled. Telephone messages left Sunday by Tillman’s family members in friendly fire.

There was a global intelligence failure. We can’t change that,” she said. Pat Roberts, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. The Republican-controlled House will move to override whether lawmakers should vote on a House-Senate compromise package that would create a new director position to coordinate the nation’s spy agencies and act as the central counterterrorism element. There was a global intelligence failure. We can’t change that,” she said.

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TILLMAN/Continued from Page 1A

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