



BRITTANY POZZI TONOZZI IS RUNNING FOR ARMY PFC. RACHEL K. BOSVELD

19, of Waupun, Wis.; assigned to the 527th Military Police Company, V Corps, Giesen, Germany; killed Oct. 26 during a mortar attack on the Abu Ghraib Police Station in Abu Ghraib, Iraq.

Fifth Wisconsin resident killed in Iraq
By Associated Press

WAUPUN, Wis. — All Rachel Bosveld wanted was to come home.

She never complained, but after eight months in the sands of Iraq, barely surviving a roadside ambush and patrolling anti-American riots, the 19-year-old military policewoman from Waupun had had enough.



“More and more people want us to go home,” she wrote in a letter to her father. “Believe me, we want to go home.”

Rachel Bosveld died Sunday in a mortar attack at a Baghdad police station, becoming the first Wisconsin woman killed in the Iraqi conflict and the fifth soldier from the state to die in that country this year.

Marvin Bosveld said he supported the invasion at first, but now he isn't sure.

“That war killed her,” Marvin Bosveld said. “I'm not so sure what I'll support now.”

Craig Bosveld, 32, described his sister as an artist who loved to draw forest scenes, play her violin and act in Waupun High School's drama club. She played Frieda in the school rendition of “You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown.” She hoped one day to become a graphic artist, he said.

“Can't believe it,” he said. “The chances are one in a hundred thousand. She did what she had to do and never complained. We're all proud of her.”

Reporters, photographers and cameramen descended on the Bosvelds' modest white house Tuesday as a cold rain fell outside. A red Marine Corps flag hung outside the door in honor of Rachel's stepbrother, 19-year-old Aaron Krebs.



The other Wisconsin soldiers who died in Iraq were Army Spc. Paul J. Sturino, 21, of Rice Lake; Army Reservist Dan Gabrielson, 40, of Frederic; Army Maj. Mathew Schram, 36, of Brookfield; and Marine Sgt. Kirk Straseskie, 23, of Beaver Dam.

Marvin Bosveld sat on the couch and told the story of his daughter's short life.

Marvin Bosveld and his former wife, Mary, were serving as foster parents when Rachel came to them as a neglected baby. The couple adopted her. After they separated, she lived in Oshkosh with her mother but moved to Waupun with her father for her junior and senior years in high school.

She enlisted in the Army when she graduated in June 2002, following in the footsteps of her father, who served in the Army in Italy from 1967-1969, and Craig, who served in the Army in Alaska.

"She idolized her brother," Marvin Bosveld said, pointing to a photograph of Craig holding a toddler-sized Rachel on a tree branch. "I had some reservation because she was a girl. She asked me not to worry about it. She was as good as anyone."

Her mother said she desperately tried to talk her daughter out of it.

"I would have done anything to have her choose a different career," Mary Bosveld said. "She said, 'I know, Mom, but I have to do this. I want to keep up the family tradition. Except, Mom, I'm going to be the first girl in our entire family.'"

Rachel graduated from boot camp in October 2002. Her father rode his Harley-Davidson motorcycle to Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri to see her graduate. She asked for a ride on the back. That, Marvin said, was his last real memory of her.

When she first got to Iraq, she was ready to "kick butt," her father said.

Until Sept. 12. That was the day a rocket-propelled grenade hit the Humvee she was driving.

Craig Bosveld said the Humvee burned up from the inside. His sister dislocated her shoulder trying to open the door. When she did free herself, her unit started taking small-arms fire until another Humvee arrived to help.

From then on, her father said, her opinion changed.





She counted the days until she could leave in her letters. One focused on all the dead and abused horses she saw in Baghdad. Another talked about anti-American riots and people chanting “USA go home.”

She transferred from night patrol to day patrol. She hoped she might live longer that way, Craig Bosveld said.

Mary Bosveld said her daughter wrote to her and asked her to ask newspapers in Wisconsin to do a story on the real hardships troops there face.



She got three letters from her daughter Tuesday, the day after the family learned she had been killed.

“Mom, don’t worry so much about me,” one letter said.

Mary Bosveld said Rachel hoped to write a book about her experiences. Now she has to pass on her daughter’s story to reporters, as much as she hates it, she said.

“I’m doing this for Rachel because this is her story,” she said.

Marvin Bosveld said the hardest part for him will be dealing with unopened birthday cards when they return. Rachel would have turned 20 on Nov. 7.

“She kept assuring me she was getting her sleep, staying alert, keeping her head down and looking over her shoulder,” Bosveld said.

“I can hardly believe it yet today,” he said. “That was my daughter.”

