

Fort Riley marks Memorial Day as Iraq death toll rises

FORT RILEY (AP) — Rain fell softly Monday as hundreds from this military community gathered at the post cemetery to honor the sacrifices of soldiers throughout the nation's history. As the death toll of Fort Riley soldiers fighting in Iraq hit 102, the commanding general said the aggregate total pales in comparison to the pain felt by those who knew and loved the soldiers.



Sebelius

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Gov. Kathleen Sebelius

discuss about the right thing to do. That’s how our country operates. This is our process. It’s OK that there is debate.”

Later this week, a memorial service will be held for Saucedo, the first of four recent Fort Riley casualties from Iraq. Like those who fell before him, his name will echo off the vaulted ceiling of Morris Hill Chapel as the sergeant calls his name one last time. The service will include a volley of gunfire in salute and the playing of “Taps.”

Col. Thomas Day, Fort Riley’s chaplain, said every memorial service is rehearsed multiple times to make sure it’s done right.

“I think in some ways each (death) gets harder.”

At a Memorial Day ceremony at the Statehouse, Cindy Butler placed a rose beneath the state’s official wreath in honor of her son, Sgt. Jacob Butler, the first Kansan and first Fort Riley soldier killed in Iraq. She was joined by Joe, Jacob’s twin brother. The entire family wore T-shirts, as they do each Memorial Day, emblazoned with Jacob’s photo and the American flag.

Jacob’s name and that of the nearly 150 Kansans or Kansas-based soldiers killed in Afghanistan or Iraq was read aloud.

“We’re indebted to their lives and families,” said Gov. Kathleen Sebelius. “The burden falls on a small number of Americans to serve.” Jim Butler smiled thinking about his son, his values and his desire to serve his country. He said he thinks of “Jake” every day, dedicating one wall and the better part of a second to his memory.

Fallen soldiers remembered

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Fort Riley. Killed Nov. 30 when a roadside bomb exploded near his vehicle in Baghdad.

— Sgt. 1st Class Dexter E. Wheelous, 37, Winder, Ga. 842nd Military Transition Team, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. Killed Dec. 25 in a bomb attack while on a combat mission in Baghdad.

— Capt. Hayes N. Clayton Jr., 29, Fort Valley, Ga. 842nd Military Transition Team, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. Killed Dec. 25 in a bomb attack while on a combat mission in Baghdad.

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— Sgt. Gregory A. Wright, 28, Boston. 1st Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. Killed Jan. 13 when a roadside bomb exploded while on a combat mission in Muqdadiyah.

— Sgt. Jonathan P. Kingman, 21, Nankin, Ohio. 1st Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. Killed Jan. 20 when a roadside bomb exploded near his vehicle near Baji.

— Sgt. 1st Class John S.. Stephens, 41, La Grande, Colo. 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. Killed March 15 when his vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb in Tikrit.

— Sgt. Wayne R. Cornell, 26, Holstein, Neb. 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry, 4th Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. Killed March 20 when a roadside bomb struck his vehicle in Baghdad.

— Pfc. Stephen K. Richardson, 22, Bridgeport, Conn. 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry, 4th Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. Killed March 20 when a roadside bomb struck his vehicle in Baghdad.

— Sgt. Curtis E. Glawson Jr., 24, Daleville, Ala. 610th Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. Killed March 20 when a roadside bomb struck his vehicle in Baghdad.

— Spc. Brian Ritzberg, 24, Long Island, N.Y. 977th Military Police Company, 1st Infantry Division. Killed April 2 when a vehicle-borne bomb exploded in Kirkuk.

— Pfc. Daniel A. Fuentes, 19, Levittown, N.Y. 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry, 4th Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. Killed April 6 when a roadside bomb exploded near his



JAN KATZ ACKERMAN/Colby Free Press

Honoring our veterans

Officers and honor guard members of Grinnell’s Veterans of Foreign Wars Post made their way past flags flying at the Hoxie Cemetery during a ceremony Monday and just prior to one of several services they conducted in Sheridan and Gove county as part of Memorial Day celebrations honoring fellow veterans who have given their lives defending America.

Editor’s note: Due to the length of the preceding article, we were unable to include all names, but we can supply a complete list if wanted.