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Some tragic cases involving soldiers back from war

The Associated Press
July 19, 2008 9:40 AM

There have been several horrific incidents shattering families of soldiers returning home from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Among them:



-A 10th Mountain Division soldier who served in Afghanistan was shot dead in February by a military policeman at Fort Drum, N.Y., after holding two other police officers at gunpoint. The officers were responding to a 911 call which they thought was sparked by a domestic dispute. Staff Sgt. Dustin McMillen was killed; his wife and three children were at home at the time.

-A Fort Campbell soldier, Sgt. Brent Burke, was charged in October with killing his estranged wife and another woman. Divorce papers filed earlier by the slain wife described Burke as a dangerously changed man since his return from Afghanistan.

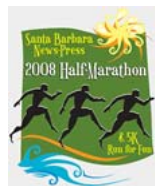
-A sergeant from the Hawaii Army National Guard who served in Iraq, Tyrone Vesperas, has been jailed on a charge of killing his 14-year-old son. The boy was trying to save his pregnant mother from an attack by Vesperas with a military-issue combat knife. The couple was going through a divorce.

-A former Army paratrooper who served two tours in Iraq pleaded guilty in May to attempted child abuse in a case involving his infant daughter,

who sustained brain damage and 17 broken bones last September. Police said the suspect, Kirk Coleman, who initially was charged with sexual assault, told them he'd been drinking and taking painkillers to numb depression related to his deployment.

-A recently divorced airman who served with distinction in Iraq chased his ex-wife out of military housing with a pistol in February before killing his two young children and himself at Oklahoma's Tinker Air Force Base. Tech. Sgt. Dustin Thorson's former wife had sought a protection order against him last year, saying he threatened to kill the children if she filed for divorce.

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