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Thelma Watts is a cancer survivor and patient of CTRC from San Antonio. She is pictured here with her husband, R.J., a retired USAF officer and former Deputy Federal Security Director.

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CFC #1128

Military Veterans are at a Greater Risk of Developing ALS!

New research finds that men with military service are at nearly a 60% greater risk of developing ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease, than an average civilian.*

The ALS Association supports the further research that is needed to learn more about the occurrence of ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) in military veterans.



*Weiskopf, *Neurology*, Jan. 11, 2005

Help in the fight against ALS...
...Designate The ALS Association
on your Workplace Giving form
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ALS
ASSOCIATION
www.alsa.org

Newslines The Army

Darby

From Page 18

Hero, he said, is the proper word because so much stood between Darby and taking action: He had trained with these soldiers. They were from the same National Guard unit in Cresap-town, Md., and therefore from the same hometown. Even people who don't necessarily like each other can become close-knit in a war zone.

Add to that the cultural ideals of not "ratting out" or "squealing" on friends, and Pierce said the odds grow higher that no one will say anything.

"Soldiers can usually figure out the right thing to do," Pierce said, "but how do we overcome those inhibitors?"

Darby said he stewed over the decision for three weeks, but in the end, he knew what he had to do.

"Everybody gets ethics training in the Army," Darby said. "We know the proper way was to go through the chain of command, but I had to go outside my chain."

And, he said, he feared for his life.

"I was afraid of Graner and the rest of his unit," Darby said. "I knew when I turned them in that they were going to prison."

An anonymous tip

Darby copied the disc, wrote an anonymous letter, stuck both in a manila folder and slipped the package to the Criminal Investigation Division.

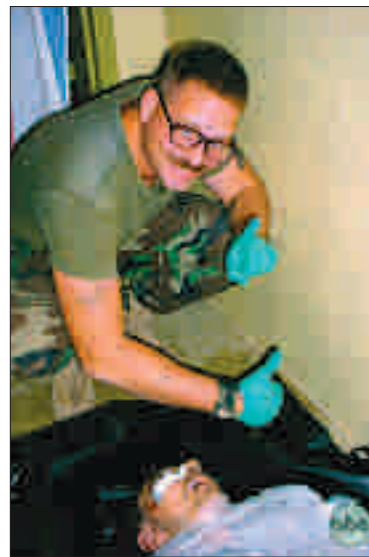
Within half an hour, CID investigators had him in their office. Darby identified the seven soldiers in the photos for investigators. But while he was there, another investigator brought in three of the soldiers he had just turned in. The investigators shielded Darby's identity, then they wrapped him in rugs and blankets and sneaked him out of the office.

For the next three weeks, he said, he hid in his closet when he slept because the soldiers he had turned in continued their duties at Abu Ghraib. He said he breathed a sigh of relief when the soldiers he had identified were finally arrested.

Then, during a TV interview broadcast while Darby was eating in a dining hall with 400 other soldiers, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld named him as the whistleblower.

Darby spoke about the case for the first time in an interview with GQ — after a government gag order was lifted — and described hearing his anonymity slip away on national television.

"I actually got a letter from the SecDef after the [TV] interview," Darby said. "[Rumsfeld] said he didn't do it maliciously, and that what I did was the right thing to do. I don't know how to take the



ABC NEWS VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Charles Graner poses with the body of a dead Iraqi man packed in ice at Abu Ghraib prison. A fellow soldier, Joe Darby, gave this and other photos to Army investigators, which prompted investigations of the prison and court-martials for numerous soldiers. The images become well-known worldwide.

letter other than that I got one."

The group of military police had been together in Hilla, Iraq, Darby said, where day-to-day life was more stressful than it was at Abu Ghraib. Driving through the streets, he said they faced the risk of improvised explosive devices and Iraqis who weren't safely locked in a cell. In Hilla, they also had access to alcohol, which they obtained on their daily drives.

At Abu Ghraib, Darby said, it was much harder to get alcohol, and although the environment was stressful because of the daily mortar attacks, the soldiers were sheltered from IEDs. Lawyers at the Abu Ghraib soldiers' trials presented stress as a factor behind soldiers behaving badly.

"Everybody handles stress in different ways," Darby said. "I kind of blocked things out. When we had to work with dead bodies, I thought, 'It's just a body.' It didn't bother me at the time."

Today, dreams of those days, of the dead bodies, haunt him — if the insomnia doesn't prevent sleep.

"It's not like we were in a non-stress environment," Darby said, "but it doesn't justify what they did. It was just the wrong seven people in the wrong place."

The photos Darby released to the CID made international headlines soon after, sparking thousands of blog entries that assailed "the whistleblower" for making his Army look bad. That title bothered Darby.

"I was an MP," he explained. "My job is to enforce the military law. They were breaking the law, so I was just doing my job."

But when Darby heard Rumsfeld mention his name on TV as the whistleblower, he was prepared for the worst from the other soldiers in the dining hall.

But they surprised him.

"I got a lot of slaps on the back, 'good jobs,' and handshakes," he said. "I only got grief from people who were close to Graner's group."

News hits home

The reaction back home in Cor-riganville, Md., hit a little harder.

"My wife was very proud, but then the media storm hit," he said. "The media stalked her at home — she couldn't leave the house."

"And the only people talking to the media were the ones who were being threatening."

Darby's friends and neighbors were also friends and neighbors of the soldiers facing prison. His family received death threats and letters, he said.

The people speaking to the media were so harsh, Darby said, that he was surprised when he heard personally from the many people back home who supported his decision. Web sites such as <http://thanksjoedarby.com> popped up, with people praising Darby for getting rid of the bad seeds in his Army.

"I've always loved being in the Army, and I've loved being a soldier," he said. "I want people to understand my unit has gotten a very bad rap. It was still one of the finest I served with — with the best individuals. No one knew this [was] going on."

As he prepared to return to the states, the military did a security

assessment of his hometown to see whether it would be safe for Darby and his family.

**Despite
the hardships
he has endured
and the turmoil the
Army went through,
Joe Darby says he
would do it again.**

"They told us there were only a few people making threats, but that it would only take one," Darby said. "They said I shouldn't go home — ever."

As he began testifying at the court-martial for the Abu Ghraib soldiers, he relocated his family. The Army allowed him to extend his contract for two years while he tried to readjust to life after Abu Ghraib. He now works as a government contractor.

Since he left, he has not spoken with Graner, Harmon, Lynndie England or any of the others he served with at Abu Ghraib — except for Staff Sgt. Ivan Frederick, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the night shift, who appeared in the photos. In 2004, Frederick was sentenced to eight years in prison on related charges and busted to private.

"At his trial, Frederick apologized for what I had to go through," Darby said. "He said I did the right thing." □