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an area home to diplomats, contractors and troops, although U.S. forces are not permitted to consume alcohol there. Soldiers on rest and relaxation leave in Qatar are issued tokens for drinks while there, a much-anticipated privilege for many after months of water, soda and near-beer while in Iraq.

The rules banning alcohol are in place to maintain good order and discipline and ensure optimum readiness, according to language in the general orders.

But it's a poorly kept secret that alcohol is available to those who really want it in the war zone. Sometimes it is smuggled in by troops themselves, bought from locals, bartered for with coalition troops who are allowed a certain amount of alcohol possession and consumption, or through contractors, who are not.

Green, 21, and three other soldiers are accused of drinking alcohol before abandoning their traffic control checkpoint in Muhmadiyah for the Iraqi family's home 200 meters away, according to documents filed June 30 in U.S. District Court in the Western District of Kentucky.

**Another killing**

In another, recent war-zone slaying case, a 3rd Infantry Division medic from Fort Benning, Ga., is accused of killing a fellow soldier and assaulting another during a night of drinking at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq, in November, according to The Associated Press.

Spc. Chris Rolan, 23, is charged with firing four rounds from his 9mm Beretta into Pvt. Dylan Paytas, according to testimony during his Article 32 hearing in May. The hearing, similar to civilian grand jury proceedings, will determine if Rolan goes to court-martial.

AP reported that the soldiers were believed to be hanging out and drinking gin and whiskey when the usually calm Rolan was provoked by Paytas and the two began to wrestle. Rolan's blood-alcohol content was measured at 0.17, according to AP. The story did not include details on how the soldiers obtained the alcohol.

The soldiers convicted in the Abu Ghraib prison abuse scandal also have been accused of consuming alcohol. The Los Angeles Times reported in June 2004 that at least one prisoner told investigators that he frequently smelled alcohol on the guards' breath in the cellblock where most of the abuses occurred.

The newspaper also reported that five military intelligence sol-

diers who worked at the prison said they learned from an irate senior officer that there was an outbreak of alcohol abuse and that members of military police units on base had been seeking sex with Iraqi prostitutes. Much of the liquor was believed to have come from Iraqi civilians who entered the compound almost daily, according to the paper.

One infantry captain, who recently served a tour in Iraq and asked to remain anonymous, told Army Times that most soldiers abide by the alcohol ban, but "there were soldiers that drank."

The captain, whose unit redeployed in the fall, said he never witnessed soldiers drinking, but alcohol was available from civilian contractors who live on nearby

bases in Iraq.

It was common knowledge that once soldiers were "off duty, they could walk over to their camp and they can get stuff from them," the captain said.

There were never cases of soldiers caught drinking during a mission, he said.

He said he agreed with the no-drinking policy, even when sol-

diers were not on duty.

"In this type of fight, it's tough because of the level of alert," he said. Soldiers have to be ready for insurgent action, he said, because there is always the possibility of coming under attack. "There is no rear area." □

Times staff writer Matthew Cox contributed to this report.



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