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# Hartford Courant.

WEATHER  
Partly Cloudy.  
High Of 73. B10

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## STOIC IN DEVOTION 'MARINES DON'T CRY'

On The Ground With Charlie Company: Arlington National Cemetery

By **JESSE HAMILTON**  
COURANT STAFF WRITER

ARLINGTON, Va. — Marines don't smile. It's strength they want to show now, as they stand in this field of white marble markers. Strength for Cpl. Jordan Pierson. Strength for his family. Utterly unruffled.

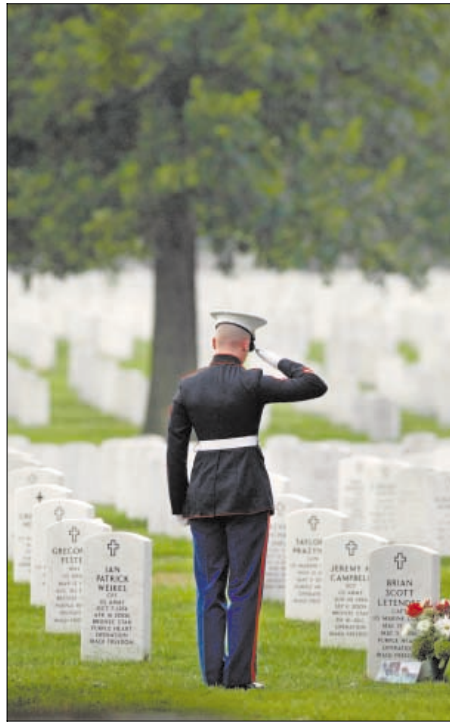
So they watch without expression as their friend's casket is prepared for the grave. They stand, their mirror-polished shoes on Arlington National Cemetery grass, the brass buttons on their dress blues shining, each face a solemn mask. The way they were taught.

"Marines don't smile," one of the Marines from Charlie Company had said that morning at the hotel.

Not that there's any cause to smile here, in one of the country's most somber places, where markers bearing the names of the latest conflicts have filled new swaths of land in the five years since 9/11. The Marines stand behind a crowd from Connecticut and greet the rifle volleys with stoic faces. They don't flinch at the 24 notes of taps, which wrench a fresh round of sobs from Pierson's friends and family.

Most of the Marines in the group volunteered to drive more than 300 miles for this hourlong ceremony. They didn't have to be here. But it was an easy choice. Of course they want to see this to the end. Pierson deserves it.

So, these Marine reservists from the Plainville-based unit — most of them kept back from the com-



RICHARD MESSINA / THE HARTFORD COURANT

**CPL. TERRY HANECHAK** of West Springfield salutes the grave of Marine Capt. Brian S. Letendre, 27, a member of Plainville's Charlie Company who was killed in Iraq on May 3.

pany's deployment to Iraq for medical reasons — stand as symbols and reminders for Pierson's people. This is what Pierson was, their quiet presence shouts. He was part of something serious and had won a place in a fraternity that makes a try at transcending death.

The Marines, who don't smile. But of course, they do.

The day before, on Tuesday, a corporal and three lance corporals climb into a borrowed military van: Cpl. Terry Hanechak, 25, from West Springfield; Lance Cpl. Roberto Diaz, 22, from New Britain; Lance Cpl. James Serafino, 22, from Stamford; and Lance Cpl. Gregory Duplessie, 25, from Thomaston.

Except for fresh haircuts, tight to their scalps, they look like any other young men, in T-shirts and shorts or jeans, earrings glinting in Diaz's ears. They adjust the stereo to find a compromise: classic rock, while Diaz plugs into the hip-hop on his laptop. They are young guys going on a trip. And in each other's easy company, they smile.

These four are some of the Charlie Company Marines in a strange limbo. They were called for war and ready to serve. But Hanechak's eardrum blew from an infection. Diaz's knee gave out. Duplessie suffered recurring bouts of tonsillitis. Serafino had a herniated disk in his back.

None of these is a grave illness, but each was

PLEASE SEE **EYES**, PAGE A9

Many Municipalities  
Slow To Shop With  
Anti-Terror Grants

## Stingy With Security Funds

By **DAVE ALTIMARI**  
And **TRACY GORDON FOX**  
COURANT STAFF WRITERS

When officials in the tiny town of Willington finally decided in late August to spend federal cash provided to fight terrorism they bought an emergency generator for an elementary school, a purchase that would typically be funded through the local education budget.

State homeland security officials had to personally visit Fairfield to implore the town to start spending almost \$300,000 in its anti-terrorism funds.

Five years after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the flow of federal money targeted to fight terrorism has dwindled and many major U.S. cities are complaining about severe funding cuts. But a review of state records shows that many Connecticut towns won't spend all they've been provided and often had to be pushed just to spend anything.

The review also found that communities have used the cash for emergency equipment typically funded through a municipal budget, such as air packs, generators and new communication centers. Others have purchased fully loaded SUVs, all-terrain vehicles and other items some law enforcement authorities say are of marginal anti-terrorism benefit.

"My big question is, are we using

PLEASE SEE **SOME**, PAGE A8

### What Towns Bought

Generators	32
Fingerprinting systems	31
Decontamination trailers	27
All-terrain evacuation vehicles	20
Communications	19
Sport utility vehicles	15
Night-vision devices	5
Boats	3
Portable weather stations	2
Dogs	1
Language translation machine	1
Ice suits	1

► Full municipal chart, **Page A8**  
► Connecticut companies are working to be players in homeland security. **Business, Page D1**



**LANCE CPL.** Roberto Diaz of New Britain, left, helps fellow Marine Cpl. Devon Julien of Windsor as Lance Cpl. James Serafino of Stamford, uses a lint brush. The men, of Charlie Company in Plainville, drove to Arlington, Va., Tuesday to attend Wednesday's services for Cpl. Jordan Pierson, 21, of Milford, who was killed in Iraq in August.

### IN NE MISSING PERSON

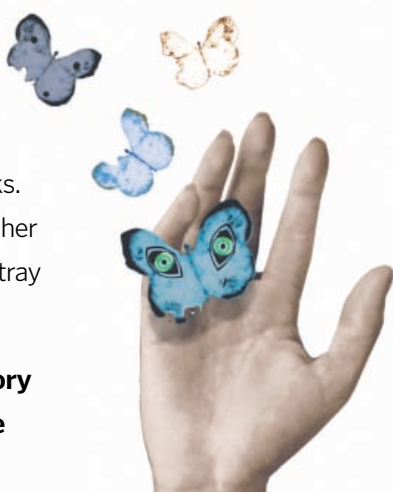
"She thought about Paul jumping, about the body she knew so well springing out into smoke and space.

"He looked like a boy and kissed like a man, and his body became a tiny thing that fell and shattered and splintered.

"While she was gasping with perfect pleasure."

She had betrayed Paul the morning he died in the World Trade Center attacks. Would letting go of her debilitating guilt betray him again?

**A 9/11 short story**  
by **Colin McEnroe**



### IN ARTS Eye Of The Artist

Edward Weston's modernist works exhibit stunning simplicity; Michelle Elzay's minimalist works show a preoccupation with slowing down time. Both are on display at the Wadsworth in Hartford. **Page G1**

### IN CONNECTICUT Facing Terror

Helen Ubiñas: Two families in Hartford confront an act of terror, learning painful details about the deaths of their daughters in a bloody attack in the city. **Page B1**

### IN COMMENTARY School Of Discontent

America has developed a syndrome that might be termed "The Neurotic Need to Believe the Worst About Public Schools," an educational researcher says. **Page C1**

## Dodd A Passing Flash Over Iowa Political Skies

By **DAVID LIGHTMAN**  
WASHINGTON BUREAU CHIEF

DES MOINES, Iowa — The firehouse on McKinley Street had the look of a typical Saturday morning. Chris Bolton was reading the newspaper, Bill Collins was cooking the ham and bean soup and Paul Dominguez was checking the ambulance.

Then he walked Sen. Christopher J. Dodd, a Democrat from Connecticut and potential presidential candidate. There was no fanfare; the dark blue Dodge Caravan drove up, Dodd gently strode in, shook hands and, in the course of an hour, showed why his White House bid has promise as

well as challenges.

Inside the firehouse ambulance was a \$12,000 cardiac monitor, about the size of a desktop computer, courtesy of a federal grant obtained because of legislation Dodd sponsored. The nine firefighters were happy to learn they had this champion, and yes, they almost all said, they would consider voting for him someday.

Dodd spent dawn to beyond dusk Saturday making seven stops much like this one, trying to make himself known to the people of Iowa, where Democrats plan to hold the first caucus of the 2008 campaign

PLEASE SEE **DODD**, PAGE A5

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