



Smuggling weapons in mail not worth risk

Pfc. Matthew Clifton
MNC-I PAO

Postal service in Iraq gives Soldiers a connection to family and friends back home in the U.S., but unfortunately there are some who abuse the system by trying to smuggle prohibited items through the mail.

Those who are caught face dire consequences.

"The consequences of trying to smuggle illegal items home varies depending on the circumstances of each case," said Maj. Matthew P. Ruzicka, chief of Military Justice, Multi-National Corps -- Iraq, Camp Victory. "Commanders have a range of options they can use in any offense that is committed."

The repercussions of smuggling mail can reach the highest level of disciplinary action -- a general court martial. This is where the most serious offenses go, Ruzicka said.

"We recently had a court martial for an officer who had shipped home a number of restricted items, including a Bradley round and a 20mm round. The Soldier was in the process of shipping home three AK-47s and various ammunition when he was caught," Ruzicka said. "We took him to a general court martial, where he received a reprimand, a dismissal from service and a \$10,000 fine. If he fails to pay, he will receive six months in confinement."

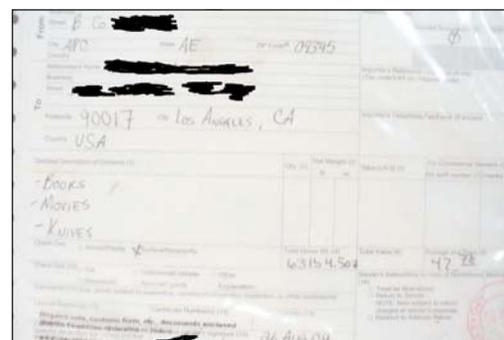
A dismissal for an officer is equivalent to a dishonorable discharge for an enlisted Soldier, Ruzicka added.

The guilty officer had 25 years of service in the Army and was eligible for retirement. As a result of the dismissal, he lost his retirement package -- which included medical benefits and retirement pay, Ruzicka continued.

"I remember a case a couple weeks ago where a Soldier took apart a television and concealed two pistols inside," said Sgt. 1st Class John Milliner Williams, postal first sergeant, 129th Postal Company, 18th Personnel Service Battalion, XVIII Airborne Corps, Fort Bragg, N.C.

The guilty service member was caught when the items he was trying to ship were scanned. "The scanners we use for the mail are similar to the scanners used when you go through the airport; they can clearly differentiate between the working parts of a television and a handgun," Williams said. "The scanners used are so complex they can detect a single 9mm round out of an entire footlocker of equipment," he added.

A Soldier was recently caught trying to ship home a 9mm handgun and one magazine



Shipping weapons and ammunition home from Iraq is a serious offense, but that doesn't stop Soldiers from attempting to hide items in the mail. Above is a military-style 9mm pistol that was discovered inside of a video game console.

courtesy photos

in a plastic foot locker. Another recent incident uncovered a Soldier trying to mail home a 9mm handgun with two magazines -- one containing rounds -- concealed inside a video game console, according to information provided by the MNC-I Staff Judge Advocate Office.

Whenever there is a case of mail smuggling, that case is investigated individually. There is no standard set in stone for what may happen to the individual responsible, Ruzicka said.

Each brigade has a brigade trial counsel who reports to Ruzicka and works with the commanders at the company, battalion and brigade levels. They look at the evidence in each case and make recommendations to the commander.

As the chief of military justice, Ruzicka works to make sure there is some type of continuity throughout the Corps. There will always be at least a slightly different scenario in individual crimes. Ruzicka's job is to make sure the various subordinate commanders within the Corps are aware of the types of punishments imposed, so if one command takes a Soldier to a general court martial for a certain crime, other commands will be aware of it and use the information

In-Depth Review

Weapons that are illegal to ship home in the mail include:

- ✗ Unexploded and exploded ordnance.
- ✗ Pistols, revolvers, rifles and other concealable firearms.
- ✗ Replica handguns, including handguns with or without lighter fluid.
- ✗ Antique firearms.
- ✗ Knives with a blade that opens automatically by hand pressure applied to a button or other device in the handle, or by operations of inertia, gravity, or both, or with a detachable blade propelled by a spring-operated mechanism.
- ✗ Ammunition.
- ✗ Shell casings and magazines.
- ✗ Weapon Parts - magazines, bolt assemblies, receiver assemblies, stock, barrel etc.

The following weapons accessories are available:

- ✓ Scopes.
- ✓ Laser sights.
- ✓ Slings.
- ✓ Scope mounts.

Personnel in Iraq should check with the U.S. Postal service before attempting to mail any questionable items to the U.S.

Medical team helps Soldiers cope with stress

**Senior Airman
Chawntain Sloan**
MNC-I PAO

Many troops come back from combat only to find they are faced with a new battle -- the battle within.

The 55th Medical Command Combat Stress Control Company at Camp Victory offers an array of services to help Soldiers manage home-front issues, stress, anger, grief and loss.

"People don't always have the tools they need to fix a problem, so they need to go to a subject-matter expert," said Staff Sgt. Nicholas Davidson, CSCC mental health technician. "We offer the tools to help them troubleshoot the problem and give them the guidance they need to find a solution."

While most people have experienced feelings of stress, anger and grief at one time or another in their life, combat situations can magnify the

intensity of these feelings, said Capt. Jill Bruno, CSCC officer-in-charge.

"Some of the situations these Soldiers are exposed to are very traumatizing, so it's normal for them to experience symptoms of combat stress and battle fatigue," Bruno said. If ignored, combat stress and battle fatigue can develop into more serious conditions.

"Some people will go home and be just fine, and others may develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder," she said.

PTSD is a psychiatric disorder that can occur if a person has experienced or witnessed life-threatening events such as military combat, terrorist incidents or serious accidents, Bruno said.

People who suffer from PTSD may relive the experience through nightmares or flashbacks, have difficulty sleeping and feel detached or estranged.

If it's severe enough, it can significantly impair a person's



photo illustration by Sgt. David Foley/MNC-I PAO

Combat stress and battle fatigue can lead to more serious conditions if they are ignored. Camp Victory's 55th Medical Combat Stress Control Company offers an array of services to help

daily life, Bruno said.

"It usually takes about six months for the symptoms of PTSD to surface," Bruno said.

"A lot of the Soldiers we work

with have already been (deployed) once if not several times before. If they have

PTSD to surface," Bruno said.

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XVIII meets, exceeds retention goals for fiscal year 2005

Sgt. David Foley
MNC-I PAO

Despite increased deployments for Soldiers in the XVIII Airborne Corps, re-enlistment numbers are exceeding that of prior years by the thousands.

Being the largest Corps in the Army, the XVIII Abn. Corps has been tasked with retaining about 50 percent of the U.S. Army Forces Command retention goals. FORSCOM alone represents about 60 percent of the Army-wide retention goals. Even though the numbers continue to grow, the XVIII Abn. Corps has succeeded in reaching and surpassing those goals year after year, said Sgt. Maj. Kenny L. Gilluly, corps retention sergeant major.

During the last three years, the XVIII Abn. Corps retention goals have more than doubled, rising from little more than 8,000 in fiscal year 2003 to almost 18,000 in Fiscal year 2005.

With nearly a month left in fiscal year 2005, the XVIIIth has already exceeded its goal by more than 20 percent.

One of the tools provided to the retention staff to meet these numbers is the Selective Re-enlistment Bonus-Deployed Program, which allows deployed Soldiers to re-enlist

while abroad for a chance to receive a tax-free bonus of up to \$15,000. "Any time we are given any tools (such as the SRBDP) it



courtesy photo

Capt. Michael R. Biankowski, (left) commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force Dragon, XVIII Airborne Corps, swears in Spc. Jeramine Earl, HHC, TF Dragon, XVIII Abn. Corps, Sept. 30 at Camp Victory.

makes our jobs easier," Gilluly said. "But no matter how much money is offered, Soldiers wouldn't re-enlist if they didn't trust their leaders and believe in what they were doing. Otherwise they would vote with their feet.

"The bonuses are a big help, but it all boils down to what they believe in," he said. "The fact that we have exceeded our expectations says a lot about the people we have."

One of the reasons the XVIIIth has such success retaining troops is because of the type of Soldiers who are in the unit, said Master Sgt. Donnell M. Edwards, corps retention operations noncommissioned officer.

"Most of our soldiers are double volunteers," Donnell said. "They volunteered for the Army, and they volunteered for airborne training. They really love what they do and believe in the mission."

Many of the Soldiers who are considering re-enlistment this year are first-term Soldiers who enlisted after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and did so with full knowledge of what would be asked of them, Gilluly said.

"They knew what they got themselves

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MAIL

when deciding punishments.

"We try to look at every situation and deal with the facts and circumstances of a particular case on an individual basis. We take the command's opinion and look at what their recommendations are," Ruzicka said. "In the end, the penalty for a Soldier smuggling mail is the commander's decision."

The commander will look at what type of Soldier the individual is and what the circumstances of the offense are in terms of how many and what the prohibited items were. The commander will look at all of those factors when making a decision on where in the spectrum of possible retributions that individual case will go, Ruzicka said.

There is a lot of room for discretion when a commander is choosing a penalty. The penalties can include things such as oral reprimands, written reprimands, memorandums of reprimand up to and including a general officer memorandum of reprimand that could be put into your military personnel file.

Soldiers who are found guilty could also face Article 15s (non-judicial punishment) at the various levels they can be administered.

There have been a lot of these issues, and there have been a lot of people who have tried to send items home illegally -- particularly weapons. Pistols and AK-47 rifles are probably the two most common items intercepted by customs, Ruzicka said.

"Because of how easily accessible some of these prohibited items are, commanders tend to be extremely harsh when a Soldier is caught trying to smuggle something illegal home," Williams said.

There are many things, other than weapons, that are also considered restricted in the military postal system.

When Soldiers bring mail into the post office, the postal clerks must inspect all packages except for free mail -- which are letters in envelopes. Free mail is only inspected when the envelope contains a disk or tape, Williams said.

"Our Soldiers will look through the entire package, through every inch of it," Williams said. "Mainly they are checking for prohibited items that might cause problems down the line."



Pfc. Matthew Clifton/MNC-I PAO

San Diego Army Reserve Soldier Sgt. Shawn Smith, attached to the 129th Postal Company, 18th Personnel Service Battalion, 18th Service Support Group, Fort Bragg, N.C., seals and labels a fellow Soldier's package in September at the camp post office.

"I don't often find prohibited items in Soldiers' mail," said San Diego Army Reservist Sgt. Shawn Smith, postal sergeant with the 129th Postal Company. "I do see a lot of ponchos, poncho liners and other things that Soldiers don't really use but are still considered issued equipment, and therefore cannot be sent through the mail."

"I don't think many of the Soldiers really know what items they can't send home," Smith continued. "The best thing to do is ask the Soldiers who work at the post office; anything else you hear is just hearsay."

Other items that are restricted include any agricultural products, anything with historic or religious importance, narcotics or alcohol-related substances, said Staff Sgt. Richard Weaver, law and order noncommissioned officer, Provost Marshal Office, MNC-I, California Army National Guard.

"If there is any doubt as to your ability to send a certain item through the mail, you should contact your camp's postal or customs office," Weaver said. "I would hate to see Soldiers get nailed for trying to smuggle items home when they were just too lazy to clean out their luggage properly."

For more information on shipping items home, call Sgt. 1st Class John Williams at the Camp Victory Post Office at 822-2934.

RETENTION

into from day one, and they believe in it," he said.

As the Army continues to progress and evolve into a more mobile and technologically advanced fighting force, many of today's Soldiers will be tomorrow's leaders.

"It is critically important to retain the soldiers who have been over here once or twice because they will be the future leadership of the Army," Gilluly said. "They will be the (noncommissioned officers) and instructors for future Soldiers, and if we can retain their knowledge base, we can fight, survive and win together in the future."

**Multi-National
Corps - Iraq
Courts-Martial Results
Sept. 1 - 30**

Sept. 1-3 - U.S. v. SGT Burke, 18th MP Bde. Acquitted by a general court-martial of attempted premeditated murder.
Sentence: None.

Sept. 10 - U.S. v. SGT Richards, 1st COSCOM. Convicted by a special court-martial of violating General Order 1 by consuming alcoholic beverages, and assault. Sentence: Reduced to E-3; forfeiture of \$900.00; confinement for 30 days; and hard labor without confinement for seven days.

Sept. 13-14 - U.S. v. CW3 Bryant, TF Dragon. Convicted by a general court-martial of violating General Order 1 by attempting to ship weapons out of the AOR, wrongfully possessing alcohol, wrongfully shipping ammunition out of the AOR, larceny of ammunition, wrongful appropriation of ammunition, false official statement, possessing stolen explosive materials, wrongfully mailing ammunition, and wrongfully soliciting another to commit a crime. Sentence: To be reprimanded, to be fined \$10,000, confinement for six months if fine is not paid, and to be dismissed from the service.

**Take a good look
at the robot now ...**

**... so you can
watch outside the
cordon later.**

STAY ALIVE

0012 IEDs KILL





Lance Cpl. Bernadette Ainsworth/MNC-1 PAO

Waterworld

Spc. Ryan Prophet (left), 319th Military Intelligence Battalion, Fort Bragg, N.C., splashes water on a runner during the Army 10-Miler held on camps Liberty and Victory Sunday.



Schedule

Buccaneers at Jets
Seahawks at Rams
Saints at Packers
Bears at Browns
Ravens at Lions
Patriots at Falcons
Titans at Texans
Dolphins at Bills
Colts at 49ers
Panthers at Cardinals
Redskins at Broncos
Eagles at Cowboys
Bengals at Jaguars
Steelers at Chargers



SSG St.Clair



PFC Clifton



SPC Welch

This Week's Picks

Jets
Seahawks
Packers
Bears
Lions
Patriots
Titans
Bills
Colts
Panthers
Redskins
Eagles
Bengals
Steelers

Buccaneers
Rams
Packers
Bears
Ravens
Falcons
Texans
Dolphins
Colts
Panthers
Redskins
Eagles
Bengals
Steelers

Buccaneers
Seahawks
Saints
Bears
Lions
Falcons
Titans
Bills
Colts
Panthers
Redskins
Cowboys
Bengals
Chargers

Week Five Bye Teams: Chiefs, Giants, Raiders, Vikings

Last Week's Results:
Overall: 7 - 7
28 - 32

7 - 7
28 - 32

9 - 5
33 - 27

8 - 6
32 - 28

Notes

With a quarter of the season behind us, Pfc. Clifton has taken sole possession of the lead, although success in week five looks doubtful since the Pick'em tournament directors, tired of his derogatory smack-talking and endless lckey-shuffling, have taken away his lucky blanket.

The guests have stopped their win-lose see-saw and posted a modest 8 - 6 last week, which was more than enough to hold second place.

Relegated to the Pick'em Hall of Zeroes once again is Staff Sgt. St.Clair, whose Seahawks botched a Redskin OT victory with a second missed field goal Sunday and are stuck at 2 - 2 with rumors of a dead kicker.

This week's guest picker is Spc. Darryl Welch, administrative clerk, Multi-National Corps - Iraq headquarters information section.

If you would like to be a guest picker, call 822-1414 or e-mail mark.st.clair@iraq.centcom.mil.

Things to know before shipping home personal items in MILVANS

Capt. John V. Rodriguez
MNC-I SJA

Getting ready to go home and wondering how you are going to take all of the personal property that you have collected over your year in the desert?

Has your command offered you the extra space in their MILVAN or CONEX for this purpose?

Here is something that you should know before you decide to ship your personal property in this manner. Soldiers are not authorized to ship personal property at Government expense when redeploying from Iraq.

You can ship your personal gear in the CONEX or MILVAN if your commander says it is okay, but you will not be able to file a claim against the government if your goods are lost, stolen or damaged during shipment.

You will assume any and all risk associated with moving your personal property in this manner. The government will not assume liability for any loss that you may incur.

How do I protect my personal goods from loss, damage or theft if I cannot carry them all back with me?

The best way for you to get your personal property home is to pack it and carry it with you on the plane. If you have too many items you should mail them.

The United States Postal Service will ship your goods back home. Also, you can purchase their insurance for a small fee.

The USPS will pay actual value minus depreciation for insured items that are lost, damaged or rifled. They will also allow you to insure up to \$5,000 per parcel.

For more information, call 822-2864.

The Camp Victory Post Office is offering extended hours to facilitate redeploying troops.

To take advantage of the extended hours, units will need to contact Sgt. 1st Class Bowie or Lt. Usher at 822-2934 or 822-2925.

The goal is for units to come as a group to mail belongings home instead of crowding the post office during normal operating hours.



IRAQ REFERENDUM AND ELECTION INFORMATION SPOTLIGHT

Referendum and Election Media guidance

Do:

1. Follow your Unit Public Affairs Office media advice
2. Be helpful and courteous to the media
3. Refer any media enquiries up the chain of command

DEMOCRATIC TIMELINE



Don't:

1. Speak "off the record" to the media
2. Express any opinions on any particular candidate or party
3. Hinder authorized media access to polling sites

If you have any questions regarding the Referendum or Election then speak to your unit Public Affairs Office:

Voices of Victory: *What do you do to cope with the stress of deployment?*



"I run often and listen to audio compact disc books."

Vance Bogнар,
CIF Warehouse Manager



"I work out and take college courses online."

Spc. Kevin Kersch,
Special Troops Battalion,
3rd Infantry Division



"For me, running anywhere from six to 16 miles is the easiest way to cope with deployments."

Staff Sgt. Patricia Ballou,
Tactical Operations Center,
3rd Infantry Division

Operating Hours

Coalition Cafe

Breakfast 5:30 - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Dinner 5:30 - 8 p.m.
Midnight Dining 11 p.m. - 1 a.m.

Sports Oasis

Breakfast 5:30 - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Dinner 5:30 - 9 p.m.

Shopette

Open 24 Hours

Camp Liberty Post Exchange

Everyday 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Fitness Center

Open 24 Hours

Chapel (Bldg. 31)

Sunday:

Protestant Service 7 and 8:45 a.m.
Catholic Mass 10:30 a.m.
Gospel Service Noon
Mormon (LDS) 2 p.m.
Episcopal 4 p.m.
Full Life Service 6 p.m.

Saturday:

7th Day Adventist 11 a.m.
Catholic Mass 8 p.m.

Mini-Chapel (Bldg. 2)

Friday:

Jewish Service 6:30 p.m.
Eastern Orthodox services:

Saturday:

Vespers 5 p.m.
Confession 5:30 p.m.
Bible Study 7 p.m.

Sunday:

Divine Liturgy 9 a.m.

Post Office

Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday - 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Sunday 1 - 5 p.m.

Golby Troop Medical Clinic

Sick Call Hours:

Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - noon
Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m. - noon

Dental Sick call:

Monday - Friday 7:30 - 10:30 a.m.
Saturday 9 - 10:30 a.m.

Mental Health Clinic:

Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. - noon

Post Deployment Health Briefings:

Monday - Friday 1 p.m.

Pharmacy:

Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - noon
Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m. - noon

STRESS

already been here before, they could come back and have a lot of the signs and symptoms."

Although the CSCC has always been an outlet for Soldiers, some may have reservations about using it.

"They may be too embarrassed to ask for help because they are afraid of what their peers think or may feel like they are weak because they cannot handle the situation," Davidson said.

"What I say to them is, 'You really need to focus on yourself, because if you are not functioning and able to take care of yourself, how are you going to be able to take of your fellow Soldiers?'" Bruno said

Some Soldiers may also have concerns that their careers will be impacted if they seek help, but Bruno said her company is more concerned with listening, not documenting.

"These are high-performing Soldiers who are faced with abnormal situations. It does not mean they have a mental health problem," Bruno said. "We normalize these normal reac-

tions to abnormal situations."

Even though the company is always there for Soldiers, Davidson said leaders and fellow Soldiers should be the first line of defense.

"It's the leaders' and Soldiers' responsibility to watch out for each other, and they probably know each other well enough to detect a change in behavior or attitude," Davidson said, adding that if service members suspect something serious going on with another troop they should not be

Capt. Jill Bruno,
55th Medical Command Combat Stress Control Company officer-in-charge

afraid to address the situation.

Davidson said sometimes talking with a peer may not be enough, and that's when further action may be needed.

"We use an acronym, OIL, which means occupational, interpersonal and leisure. If they are not functioning in one of those areas and the situation is getting worse or not improving, that's when they need us," Davidson said.

For more information or to make an appointment to see a provider, contact the CSCC at 822-2781.

Victory MWR Events October 4 - 10

Today: Spades at 8 p.m. at Bldg. 124; Ping Pong at 8 p.m. at Bldg. 51; At the Gym: Tae-Kwon-Do from 6 - 7 p.m.; Fencing from 7:30 - 9 p.m.; Flag Football Coaches Meeting at Bldg. 51 at 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday: Dominoes at 8 p.m. at Bldg. 124; Spades at 8 p.m. at Bldg. 51; At the Gym: Aerobics from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.; Boxing from 8 - 9 p.m.;

Thursday: Country Night at 7 p.m. at Bldg. 124; Nine ball at 8 p.m. at Bldg. 51; At the Gym: Tae-Kwon-Do from 6 - 7 p.m. Ping pong tournament at 6 p.m.; Volleyball coaches meeting at 12:30 p.m. in Bldg. 51.

Friday: *Jeeppers Creepers* Movie Marathon at 5 p.m. at Bldg. 124;

Salsa Lessons at 8 p.m., Latin Night at 9 p.m. at Bldg. 51; At the Gym: Aerobics from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.; Fencing from 7:30 - 9 p.m.; Flag football tournament.

Saturday: Hip Hop Night 8:30 p.m. at Bldg. 124; College football at 8 p.m. at Bldg. 51; At the Gym: Tae-Kwon-Do from 6 - 7 p.m.; Boxing from 8 - 9 p.m.; Flag football tournament.

Sunday: NFL football at 9 p.m. at Bldg. 124; NFL football at 9 p.m. at Bldg. 51; At the Gym: Fencing from 7:30 - 9 p.m.; Flag football/Volleyball tournament.

Monday: Chess at 8 p.m. at Bldg. 124; Dominoes at 8 p.m. at Bldg. 51; At the Gym: Aerobics from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. Boxing from 8 - 9 p.m.

MNC-I Commanding General: Lt. Gen. John R. Vines **MNC-I Production Chief:** Staff Sgt. Mark St.Clair
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