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**Special reports**

# Costly week for Illinois

## Six Marines die in Iraq fighting

**By Crystal Yednak and John Keilman**

Tribune staff reporters

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Three Marines from the Chicago suburbs were killed in action in Iraq this week, raising the number of Illinois military personnel killed this week to six, military officials said.

Marine Sgt. David M. Caruso, 25, of Naperville, was killed Tuesday in Al Anbar province, which includes the city of Fallujah, the Pentagon announced today. The Department of Defense did not release further details about Caruso's death.

Sgt. Caruso was stationed in Okinawa, Japan, for more than three years. "But he wanted to be in Afghanistan or Iraq," Joe Caruso said of his son, who was a member of the 2nd Force Reconnaissance Company of the II Marine Expeditionary Force based at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Joe Caruso said his son joined the Marines after graduating from Waubonsie Valley High School in Aurora because he "wanted to see everything and learn everything,"

"He was always different. He always tried to do more," Joe Caruso said. The younger Caruso was sent to Iraq in August. He called his parents at 3 a.m. last Friday and said he wouldn't be able to contact them for a couple weeks but they should know he was OK.

Joe Caruso said the family did not have many details on the circumstances of his son's death. He said the family was told that two others in Caruso's unit were wounded.

Funeral services for David Caruso have not been planned yet.

Separately, Marine Reservist Cpl. Peter Giannopoulos, 22, of Inverness, died after being shot in the chest Thursday, said his father, John Giannopoulos.

His unit had been stationed in the Babil province south of Baghdad.

Peter Giannopoulos, a 2000 graduate of Fremd High School in Palatine, had received his parents' permission to join the reserves as a 17-year-old, motivated by patriotism and a desire to see the world.

"He put his life on the line to keep everyone safe, just like hundreds of thousands of other men and women out there," John Giannopoulos said outside the family home.

Peter Giannopoulos had been a member of the Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines, based in Waukegan. In Iraq, he served on a mobile

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**Photo**[David Caruso](#)

Peter Giannopoulos

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strike team that manned an armored Humvee, his father said.

Lance Cpl. Nicholas Larson, 19, of Wheaton was killed Tuesday as U.S. forces pushed toward Fallujah, family and military officials said.

Military officials said the high number of fallen Marines from Illinois was a coincidence. All six Illinois Marines who died this week were assigned to different units. The other fatalities announced this week:

- Lance Cpl. Aaron Pickering, 20, of Harrisburg, was killed Wednesday in fighting near Fallujah.

- Lance Cpl. Branden Ramey, 22, of Belvidere died Monday, also in the push toward Fallujah.

- Cpl. Joshua Palmer, 24, of Blandinsville died Monday when his bulldozer fell into the Euphrates River on the Fallujah peninsula.

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Nick Larson



Aaron Pickering



Branden Ramey



Joshua Palmer

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