



AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW  
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## **On the Occasion of the 2,500th Troops Death in Iraq, Military Families Mourn and Speak Out: Honor the Fallen, and Bring Our Troops Home Now!**

*Available for Interview: Families of deployed and fallen soldiers from Iraq War*

NATIONWIDE – On the eve of the next horrific milestone, the 2,500 troop death in Iraq, families with loved ones who are serving in Iraq, those with loved ones who were killed in Iraq, and families whose loved ones may deploy or re-deploy are calling on the Bush Administration, Congress and decision-makers at all levels to honor the fallen and prevent further deaths by ending the occupation of Iraq, bringing our troops home now and taking care of them when they get here.

Despite the Bush Administration's celebration of a continuing series of "banner days" and milestones in Iraq, Military Families Speak Out members have not seen milestones to celebrate; they are instead seeing gravestones – more and more of them each day. Military Families Speak Out is an organization of over 3,000 military families speaking out against the war in Iraq, the largest organization of military families in the history of the United States to ever oppose a war.

"To lose a loved one to war is painful; but to lose a loved one to a war based on lies is more than unbearable," stated Diane Santoriello of Verona, Pennsylvania whose son First Lt. Neil Santoriello, age 24, served in the Army and was killed in action near Fallujah on August 13, 2004.

"Many parents of daughters who are my daughter's age worry about their grades in college, or whether their job is suited to them, or how to help them afford gas these days. I worry every minute of every day about whether my daughter will make it through yet another day, as she participates in a war that should never have been" said Maureen Hearn of Needham, Massachusetts, whose daughter in the Army is currently serving a first deployment in Iraq.

**Available for Interview:** *The following and other members of Military Families Speak Out and Gold Star Families Speak Out are available for interview:*

### **Families Whose Loved Ones Died in Iraq:**

**H. Elaine Johnson of Cordova, SC** whose son Spc. Darius Jennings, age 22, was killed on November 2, 2003 when the Chinook helicopter in which he was riding was shot down near Fallujah. The crash took the lives of 15 other troops as well.

**Sue Neiderer of Pennington, NJ** whose son 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Seth Dvorin, age, 24, was killed in action near Iskandariyah, Iraq on February 3, 2004.

**Diane Davis Santoriello of Verona, PA** whose son 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Neil Santoriello, age 24, was killed in action near

Fallujah on August 13, 2004.

**Tia Steele of Baltimore, MD**, whose step-son Lance Cpl David Michael Branning was killed in action in Fallujah on November 12, 2004.

**Celeste Zappala of Philadelphia, PA** whose son Sgt. Sherwood Baker, age 30, was the first Pennsylvania National Guardsman to die in combat since World War II. He was killed in action on April 26<sup>th</sup> while guarding the Iraq Survey Group in Baghdad who were searching for WMD's long after it was known that there were none.

**Families Whose Loved Ones are Currently Serving in Iraq:**

**Maureen Hearn of Needham, MA** whose daughter is currently serving in the Army and driving night convoys in Baghdad.

**Laurie Loving of Davis, CA** whose son 21-year-old son is in the Army, serving his first deployment in Iraq.

**Joan Najbar of Duluth, MN** whose son is in the Minnesota National Guard and currently deployed to Iraq.

**Larry Syverson of Richmond, VA** who has three sons serving in the military; all have served in theatre in the Persian Gulf. One of Larry's son's was a patient in the psychiatric ward of Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Since his discharge from Walter Reed he has been stop-lossed and recently re-deployed to the Kuwait-Iraq border.

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*Military Families Speak Out ([www.mfso.org](http://www.mfso.org)) is an organization of over 3,000 military families opposed to the war in Iraq, with loved ones who are serving, or have served in Iraq, may deploy or re-deploy, or have died as a result of the war in Iraq.*