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God Bless our Soldiers

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Missing Soldiers Parents led drive for Web cams to Iraq

By Kristin McAllister
Dayton Daily News

Union TWP. Clermont County- Keith and Carolyn Maupin are making sure no one forgets their eldest son.

The Maupins know all too well the pains of the Iraq war. The surge in casualties of troops from nearby communities is salt to their raw wounds. Their son, Army Sgt. Keith "Matt" Maupin has been missing since April 2004 when insurgents ambushed his caravan and captured him just outside Baghdad.

The Army lists the reservist, now 22, as captured and continues to search for him in Iraq. But on Wednesday, the Maupins beamed as brightly as the sun overhead as the shipment of 90 Web cam-equipped personal computers and surge protectors were loaded into a FedEx truck in the first part of their trek to the Anaconda Army headquarters in Baghdad, where their son spent time prior to his capture.

"When (the troops) first boot up, the first picture they'll see is Matt," he said.

"We want to make sure they know who Matt is and what all this means. I just wished I knew who's gonna be the first on the Web Cam."

Volunteers of the Yellow Ribbon Support Center in Eastgate have raised \$60,000 for the computers, including a \$30,000 check from an anonymous donor. The shipment is expected to arrive in Iraq in about three days, FedEx officials said. Despite not knowing the welfare of their son, the Maupins remain steadfast in their belief that he will soon come home to them.

"We have faith in Matt, and I believe that God's will will be done, and if he is to come home, he will. I know he'll be here and so does Carolyn," Keith Maupin Said.

"There's nothing we can do for Matt but make sure the Army does not forget him and is doing everything to find him, and they are. Their second mission is Matt. The Army tells them, stay safe and second is to find Matt."

Meantime, the Maupins spend all their free time at the support center. When meeting others with loved ones in the war overseas, or those with loved ones who have been killed in it, words aren't necessary, Keith Maupin Said. Some solace for family members, Maupin added, can be found in reminding oneself of their one's belief and constitution.

POW Petition Drive – Signatures are still being gathered calling upon the President and Congress to "direct the Department of Defense to recognize and designate as "Prisoner of War" (POW) not "Missing/Captured" (MIA-C) any member of the U.S. Armed Forces, paramilitary, militia, U.S. citizens employed by a U.S. agency or under U.S. Government contract who are captured and held against his/her will . . ."

The petition concludes; "To ensure that the classification of U.S. Military and Civilian Personnel is not inferior to that provided for under the Geneva Conventions, we ask that you direct the Department of Defense to eliminate the designation Missing- Captured and reinstate the designation "Prisoner of War."

If it bothers you that every time the media refers to either Capt. Speicher or Sgt. Matt Maupin as Missing-Captured instead of the rightful designation Prisoner of War, then you need to join the POW Petition Drive. Petitions may be downloaded at www.nationalalliance.org.

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