

Couple awaits son's letters

20-year-old serves as front-line medic

By Darrell Clem
Staff writer

Tim and Iris Morgan didn't go to work the day after the United States declared war on Iraq. They checked the mail for a letter from their 20-year-old son, Timothy, an Army medic on the front line in Saudi Arabia.

It didn't come, but they hope to hear from him soon.

The Commerce Township couple last talked with their son, a 1989 Walled Lake Central High School graduate, when he phoned home the Saturday after Christmas.

"WE DON'T KNOW for sure where he is, except that he's on the front line. He's in a mobile medical unit that moves with the troops," said Tim Morgan, a paramedic firefighter for West Bloomfield Township.

Each letter the Morgans receive from the Persian Gulf brings a sigh of relief for their son's safety.

"It's an assurance that we cling to, that we need to hear," the father said.

Iris Morgan, fire prevention secre-

THE GULF WAR Hitting Home

tary for the city of Farmington Hills, couldn't bring herself to talk about her son's involvement in the Persian Gulf War, suggesting instead that her husband respond to questions.

"I'd probably start crying," she said.

Although Tim Morgan, himself an Army medic in Korea in 1967-68, worries about his son, he supports the U.S. attack aimed at forcing Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

"I'm not just flapping my lips. I've got something to lose in all this," Morgan said. "Nobody wants to see anybody die. I sure don't want my son to die."

Even though Morgan knows that war can divide a country, he believes the vast majority of Americans support the U.S. strike against Iraq, and he hopes they show it.



Tim and Iris Morgan stayed home from work Thursday to be together and watch the news about the Persian Gulf war. Their son, Timothy, whose framed picture stands in front of his mother, is serving as a medic.

"THE TROOPS OVER there need to know that they're supported," Morgan said. "They may have to make the ultimate sacrifice for us. This is America, and you can either approve or disapprove of what's going on, but everybody should agree to the fact that we need to support the men and women that are over there."

Morgan had expected earlier that war would be averted. When the U.S. attack came Wednesday, he said, "it was quite an emotional shock, but my wife and I are dealing with it."

"We both decided not to go to work today (Thursday) so that we could stay together," he said.

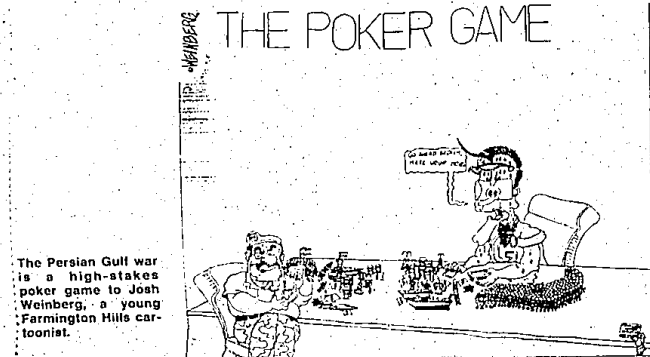
The younger Morgan earlier had been stationed in Fort Hood, Texas.

He had been in the service for about a year when he was ordered to the Persian Gulf on Oct. 13.

As a former medic, his father offered advice. "I told him to listen to people who know more than he does and to do what he's told. And I told him to have faith in God," Morgan said.

Morgan hopes the war will be over soon and that his son -- and the other troops in the Persian Gulf -- will escape harm. Until then, he supports the U.S. actions that his son believes were warranted.

"He thought it was something that was important and necessary," Morgan said. "He's proud to serve his country."



The Persian Gulf war is a high-stakes poker game to Josh Weinberg, a young Farmington Hills cartoonist.

Protection business gets boost from terrorist fear

By Amy Ross
Staff writer

Business has been booming for a local detective agency selling counter terrorist equipment.

Everyone from Fortune 500 executives to Chaldean grocers are putting in orders for bullet-proof vests, metal detectors and letter-bomb detectors, said Dennis Kearns, a Birmingham detective. He is director of his own agency, the Phoenix Group International Inc.

"People have been preparing for this for 14 months," said Kearns on day two of Operation Desert Storm. "But we've had a whole lot of orders in the last three days."

In addition to the oil, automotive and manufacturing companies here and across the country placing orders, a local court recently ordered a weapons detecting system, Kearns said.

Normally, about 30 percent of Kearns' business concerns "counter-terrorist" work, in which he provides basic protection of assets "for corporations and executives."

Among those duties, he said, is thwarting any electronic surveillance, like phone or room taps. Only occasionally will an executive need personal protection, like perhaps from a disgruntled employee or over-zealous competitor.

KEARNS OFTEN works with people who have experience in the Central Intelligence Agency or Secret Service. In the past he's employed a former terrorist expert from the CIA.

Among the items he's currently shipping to customers:

- **body armor**, including bullet-proof vests. Kearns sells an "executive" slip-on vest that fits easily under a coat or which can be worn by itself over a shirt. It looks just like a regular vest.

"A Chaldean grocer bought one, as well as some manufacturing reps of Iraqi descent," he said.

- **letter-bomb detector**, that looks like a desk-top computer printer. Letters are fed through the machine, which can detect the presence of metal as small as a tiny pin or staple. The machine can also be programmed to sound when it detects metallic objects like batteries or foil -- common components in such explosives.

- **weapons/metal detector**, similar to the walk-through machines used in airports. The unit is portable, and comes with free training by experienced agents.

Other counter-terrorist equipment Kearns is selling includes: An infrared zoom laser illuminator that allows the user to see in the dark; a bullet-resistant brief case; and bullet-proof car windshields and windows.

WHETHER THE hype is warranted, Kearns doesn't know, but reports last week of bomb threats in Troy including the Oakland Mall -- and the torching of a Chaldean restaurant in Detroit, may make some people sit up and take notice. He also noted the rumors that the Superbowl would be canceled this year to avoid having

War is scary to watch

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LIKE JOSH, Rachel finds it amazing that Americans can sit and watch the war on television as it occurs. "With the radio, you can't really visualize it. We are living through this. This will be in the history books soon," she said.

Rachel described the fear and surprise her classmates are sharing at North Farmington. "They think the U.S. will be bombed," Rachel said, adding she doesn't believe that will happen.

And she acknowledges that among classmates, both with Jewish and other Middle Eastern backgrounds, differences of opinion about the con-

flict abound. But she says she's not scared by those differences.

In Josh's customary fashion, he took to his drawing table Tuesday night when it was announced the U.S. and Allied forces were attacking Iraq.

"He sat at his drawing board in his room with the radio going," said his mother Valerie Weinberg, a St. Clair Shores high school English teacher.

IN HIS ROOM, Josh has a map of the Middle East and he's been charting events as they happen. "I'm keeping pretty close tabs."

In October when the Observer spoke with Josh about his cartooning, he said Saddam Hussein and George Bush were his favorite sub-

jects. But he's still surprised by events.

The bombing of Israel hits home for Josh and his family. "I'm Jewish. Israel is in a spot surrounded by Arab countries. If Israel tries to defend itself, all of our allies and Israel's allies will turn around and cause havoc."

"It was quite a surprise because I had a feeling if there was any military force that we would start it. But I had no idea he (Hussein) would try to drag Israel into it," Josh continued.

"I'm just hoping that Israel can defend itself. I know it can. But George Bush wants them to hold out as long as possible."



Private detective Dennis Kearns said orders are pouring in for counter-terrorist equipment, such a large group of Americans in one place.

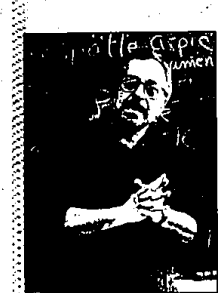
Kearns doesn't believe there are any targets in Oakland County that would interest terrorists per se, but said that elsewhere security has been stepped up, like at the Warren plant, Selfridge Air Force Base, federal court house in downtown Detroit, and Metro airport.

"You'd have to wonder what benefit a terrorist would get out of all from targeting Oakland County, except the noise and publicity," he said.

Kearns added that some people have expressed concerns to him about shopping in local malls, and admitted his own concern that his mother was visiting Disney World.

"Of course there is a greater likelihood that something will happen to you in a public place than if you're sitting at home," he said. "But it's still probably less than the chances of getting struck by lightning."

Middle East expert fears war will take a high toll



Carlo Coppola

By Amy Ross
Staff writer

Exactly two hours before U.S.-led forces attacked Iraq, Oakland University Middle East expert Carlo Coppola hoped he was "dead wrong" in thinking war would break out soon.

Unfortunately, he said, he wasn't.

Coppola, director of OU's Center for International Programs who holds a doctorate degree from the University of Chicago, predicted the attack would take place in the next day or two because "there would be no moon at night" in the Iraqi sky. Indeed, later reports confirmed Iraq's nights would be moonless for five days.

Coppola, a 52-year-old Birmingham resident, was "glued to his TV set" even before word of war emerged, and remained up all night watching the news until he had to go to work Thursday morning.

"I feel very tired," he said on Thursday. "I was disturbed to hear this morning that [Allied] ground troops were crossing over the border into Kuwait."

He was disturbed not only because he currently opposes the use of force in the region, but also because his son-in-law is a gunner in an M-1 tank on the front lines.

"He'll be one of the first to go in."

IT HAS BEEN "real tough" on his daughter, who lives in Texas, he added. "But luckily she started school this week at the University of Texas. It's given her something else to concentrate on."

The professor calls his daughter every day, but what he says to her on the phone and what he really thinks are sometimes two different things, he said.

"I think this war will be holocaustic in the worst sense of the word, that there'll be a loss of tens of thousands of lives," he said.

Prior to the Allied flight attack, Coppola felt certain Israel would launch atomic weapons. "We'd be grateful to Israel if they did -- it gets us off the hook," he said.

But Thursday morning, after word spread of

the Allies' swift successful attack and few casualties, Coppola thought that ominous prediction was less likely.

Coppola's teaching career is diverse, and includes a cuisine class and instructing opera singers in other languages. But in his 15 years at OU his specialties have remained Middle Eastern and Indian studies.

In his class "Introduction to the Middle East," (which he jokingly calls "The Muddled East") Coppola focuses on English and French imperialism of the area in the early 20th century. Those history lessons, he said, provide insight into today's Persian Gulf crisis and other conflicts nearby.

"HISTORICALLY IRAQ did have ties to Kuwait," he said, explaining the border between Iraq and Kuwait has never been clearly defined since Kuwait's independence, with some "neutral" areas belonging to neither country.

Coppola doesn't condone Iraqi President

Saddam Hussein's actions -- he called him "a ruthless brutal man, everything that is bad" -- but said some knowledge of the region's history can shed light on recent developments.

Coppola also found President George Bush's refusal to discuss the Israeli-Palestine conflict now an "absurd double standard," saying the United States has buckled under to pressure from the Israeli Political Action Committee here in our country.

"We should support Israel, but not what they're doing to the Palestinians."

Israel, he said, is becoming more right-wing and the United States should be wary.

Coppola believes the war will be short, perhaps just two weeks. And he has no doubt the United States and Allied forces will win the battle. But, he added, the United States will be the loser in the long run.

"Not for decades will we be able to form relationships with countries in that region, the intense hate for us will be so high."