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Subject: FW: Iraqi Codel Incident in Press...
Sent: Sun, 27 Nov 2005 10:39:43 -0500
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There is nothing right now on the front pages of any of the major news sites, but found this article from the Macon Telegraph. Has quotes from Rep Marshall.

For those being cc'd on this event for the first time. Here's a synopsis: On 26 Nov, CODEL Murphy-Skelton, which includes Tim Murphy (R-PA), Ike Skelton (D-MO), Jim Marshall (D-GA), and G.K. Butterfield (D-NC), was involved in a traffic accident en route to Baghdad airport.

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Marshall OK after accident in Iraq

Two congressmen injured when convoy vehicle overturns

By Liz Fabian

TELEGRAPH STAFF WRITER

A military vehicle carrying U.S. Rep. Jim Marshall, D-Macon, flipped on the way to the Baghdad, Iraq, airport Saturday, injuring two other members of Congress, said Marshall, who was not hurt.

Rep. Tim Murphy, of Pennsylvania, was airlifted to a military hospital in Germany for an MRI on his neck, Marshall said, while Rep. Ike Skelton, of Missouri, was being checked at a hospital in Baghdad.

In a phone interview from Baghdad, Marshall explained how dignitaries are shuttled in fast-moving convoys that often take up the middle of the road to deter oncoming motorists.

Shortly after dark Saturday, Marshall's vehicle encountered an oncoming truck that was not yielding to the convoy, he said.

"Then all of a sudden brakes get slammed on. Then we hit something and go off the side of the road and tip over," Marshall said.

The congressional delegation was riding in a "box-like" vehicle soldiers call the "ice cream truck," he said.

"Everybody sort of fell over to the side. There's no cushion to it. It's all solid metal with bolts sticking out," Marshall said. "I feel like a fool. I didn't put my seat belt on."

Marshall said he also regrets not buckling in Skelton, who has limited use of his arms from a bout with childhood polio. "I'm just thankful I was able to hold on to him and he didn't get real hurt."

The accident triggered memories of Marshall's first trip to Iraq with Skelton, the ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee. Then, Marshall commented on the dangers of high-speed driving designed to get dignitaries safely through often-hostile territory.

"It's so odd to me that I said, 'Shoot, this is more dangerous than the terrorists,' and dang if we don't flip over," Marshall said.

The delegation traveled to Afghanistan for Thanksgiving with the troops and then on to Baghdad, Marshall said.

It was his sixth visit to the war zone.

"It's an extraordinary privilege to be able to visit with the soldiers from Georgia," said Marshall, who ate lunch Saturday with members of the 48th Brigade.

Marshall said it had been a great trip until the accident.

He found the Georgia National Guard troops to be in good spirits, he said.

The soldiers' mission now is to provide security around military bases after initially battling insurgents in the danger zones of south Baghdad, he said.

"On one hand, (they're) relieved and on the other hand, they're soldiers and they want to be there," Marshall said.

He had the opportunity to meet with Gen. George Casey, commander of the multi-national force in Iraq, and discuss the 48th Brigade.

"Casey knows the outfit and the leadership and he thinks of it very highly, as he should," Marshall said.

Although Marshall had planned to return to Macon in time for a ribbon-cutting ceremony Monday afternoon at the new Macon-Bibb County Convention and Visitors Bureau building, he missed his return flight because of the accident and his travel plans were not set as of Saturday night.