



NEWSHOUR

A NewsHour with Jim Lehrer special for students

EXTRA

COALITION RESCUES U.S. PRISONER OF WAR

April 2, 2003

U.S. special operation forces rescue Pfc. Jessica Lynch, who went missing after an Iraqi ambush on March 23.

American-led coalition troops rescued a U.S. prisoner of war identified as **Pfc.** Jessica Lynch, a supply clerk who went missing after her maintenance company was ambushed near the city of **Nasiriya** on March 23.

Lynch, 19, of Palestine, W. Va., was found in the Saddam Hospital in Nasiriya, which was also being used as an Iraqi military facility, according to **Central Command**.

Private Lynch's condition

At the Wednesday CentCom briefing, Brig. Gen. Vince Brooks showed a videotape of her rescue by **Special Operations** and marine units. U.S. officials in Kuwait said on condition of anonymity that she is believed to have broken legs, a broken arm and at least one gunshot wound.

She was transferred to the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in southwestern Germany and arrived there about 4 p.m. EST Tuesday, said Heather Miller, spokeswoman for the 86th Airlift Wing at Ramstein Air Base.

Lynch was one of 12 U.S. soldiers from the 507th Maintenance Company attacked near Nasiriya, a Euphrates river crossing, after making a wrong turn during the war's early days. The Defense Department had not previously listed Lynch as a **POW**, instead saying she was missing in action after the ambush.

Family reaction

Lynch's family members said they were overjoyed at the news and were anxious to see the aspiring teacher return home to Palestine, some 70 miles north of Charleston.

"Everybody was really worried, normal concerns and everything like that," cousin Sherri McFee told the Associated Press. "But we all remained hopeful and knew she would be home."

West Virginia Senator Jay Rockefeller, called the rescue "a miracle."

"God watched over Jessica and her family," he told the AP. "All West Virginians are rejoicing. ... This is a testament to the amazing skill and courage of our military."

Motivations to service

Lynch joined the Army to get an education, her family said. She left a farming community with an unemployment rate of 15 percent, one of the highest levels in West Virginia.

She was also following in the footsteps of her older brother, a National Guardsman based at Fort Bragg, N.C. Jessica Lynch enlisted through the Army's delayed-entry program before graduating from high school.

Vocabulary

Pfc. – (n.) *Private first class*

Nasiriya – (n.) *city (1987 pop. 265,937), provincial capital, SE Iraq, on the Euphrates River. It is the center of a date-growing region. Founded in 1870, the city was captured by the British in 1915. Nearby are the ruins of Ur. (Columbia Encyclopedia)*

Central Command – (n.) (n.) *Headquartered at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida, United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) is one of nine Unified Combatant Commands assigned operational control of U.S. combat forces. A Unified Combatant Command is composed of forces from two or more services, has a broad and continuing mission, and is normally organized on a geographical basis into regions known as "Areas Of Responsibility" (AORs). USCENTCOM's AOR stretches from the Horn of Africa to Central Asia. (www.centcom.mil)*

Special Operations - (n.) *highly trained military units charged with carrying out secret and/or dangerous missions, often behind enemy lines.*

POW – (n.) *prisoner of war*