

Iraq injuries fatal to soldier from Madison

Staff news services

A Wisconsin Army Reserve member who checked up on his fantasy baseball league via the Internet while serving in Iraq has died from injuries suffered in an explosion there.

Sgt. 1st Class Matthew R. Kading, 32, of Madison, died Monday at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, the Pentagon said Tuesday. He had been injured near Tikrit Oct. 19 when an explosive detonated near his vehicle.

He was assigned to the Army Reserve's 983rd Engineer Battalion, based in Monclova, Ohio.

Army Lt. Col. Gary Kolb said Kading worked as a construction engineering supervisor.

A relative told The Capital Times this morning that the family would have a statement later today.

Rick Roeth, a close friend, said Kading graduated from Madison East High School in 1991 and joined the Reserves before he joined the Army full time a year later.

Kading served until about 2000 or 2001, spending time mostly as an electrician in South America, and after being discharged he returned to the Reserves, Roeth said.

Kading had kept in contact with friends across the country through the fantasy baseball league. He was general manager of the Milwaukee Beers of the Roberto Clemente APBA Fantasy Baseball League. Roeth ran Kading's team while he was on active duty.

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Roeth, who ran Kading's Milwaukee Beers team on the Roberto Clemente APBA Fantasy Baseball League while Kading was on active duty, said fellow league members were saddened by his death and renamed the league after the soldier as a way to support his family emotionally.

"He was kind of an infec-

tious guy, the life of the party," said Roeth, who met Kading in a Madison-area bowling league about 20 years ago.

"He always put other people first," Roeth said.

Dan Seppa, who coached Kading during his Junior League bowling years, described him as "a great kid, very coachable. He got along with his teammates and the rest of the kids."

Mike McArdle, a retired East High teacher, said Kading was a good student as a senior in his aviation and space education class.

"I appreciated his sense of humor, he had a way of looking at things slightly from the side," McArdle said.

Craig Ball of Meriden, Conn., one of the baseball fantasy league managers, said he and Kading talked baseball via e-mail and instant messaging before Kading was activated for service in Iraq, and the soldier kept in touch electronically after going overseas.

"He would check our message board from Iraq," Ball said. "I guess for him it was like a piece of home."