

# METRO & STATE

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CHAD OLIGSCHLAEGER ■ 1986-2008

# Family: Marine liked to push life to limit



**Chad Oligschlaeger** was described as charming, kind – and stubborn.

Parents think McNeil grad, found dead on base, may have had stress disorder

By Marty Toohey

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Marine Cpl. Chad Oligschlaeger wasn't the kind of guy who let things go easily.

The McNeil High School graduate liked to fix things, push people, stretch situa-

tions to their limit. If he had had a motto, friends and family say, it would have been: "How far can I make you before I break you?" They say he got away with it through the sheer force of his personality, the infectious energy and the goofy giggle that hooked buddies into every kind of mischief imaginable.

He was the kind of guy who couldn't leave Iraq behind, his family said. He was found dead May 20 in his quarters, alone, at the Twentynine Palms Marine base in Southern California. His funeral is at

10:30 a.m. today at Cook-Walden/Chapel of the Hills.

The Marines are conducting an investigation and have not released details of his death. His parents, who live in Round Rock, believe it was related to post-traumatic stress disorder.

"He was wounded," said his father, Eric Oligschlaeger, "every bit as wounded as someone who lost an arm or leg."

Since learning of his death, the

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# OLIGSCHLAEGER: Teacher says Marine toiled to help fix her car

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Oligschlaegers said, they have held what amounts to a long-running, low-key party leading up to today's funeral.

Chad Oligschlaeger was at once charming, stubborn, willful and kind, relatives and friends said. His mother, Julie Oligschlaeger, recalled that when Chad was 10, the family visited his grandfather, a big, stoical former Texas Ranger who people didn't sass. Chad wanted to hang a rope swing from a large tree. He found his grandfather's work unsatisfactory, his mother recalled.

"What are you, stupid?" she remembers Chad, who was maybe 4 feet tall, asking his hulking, red-faced grandfather. "I wanted the knots here and here and here."

Nancy Kushwara, one of Oligschlaeger's teachers at

Deerpark Middle School, said he was chronically discontented, recognizable for wearing all black and a pair of small earrings. She said that he mellowed but that his reputation followed him, sometimes unfairly.

Those who didn't know him, she said, missed times such as when, after she paid a mechanic to fix her car and he left the engine in pieces, Oligschlaeger spent several summer days sweating in her driveway to fix it.

His family says his willingness to help others and his penchant for mischief were driven by a desire to push life's limits. His friends have adopted a simple litmus test based on his example: WWCD, or "What Would Chad Do?"

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