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ONE YEAR LATER

The Reverend Yuren Tai from the Seattle Koyasan Buddhist Temple shields the flame of a candle from the wind before the start of a community gathering commemorating the first anniversary of the Japanese earthquake and tsunami. About 200 people attended the event Sunday March 11th at the Kobe Bell at Seattle Center. At 2:46 p.m., the time of last year's earthquake, a minute of silence was observed, followed by the ringing of the Kobe bell by the dignitaries in attendance and members of the public.



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Seattle Soldier Atrocity

Afghan shooter was on fourth deployment to war zone

By Gene Johnson
The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — A U.S. soldier suspected of killing at least 16 Afghan civilians in a nighttime assault is from a brigade that was the first in the Army to use the Stryker, a nimble eight-wheeled, light infantry vehicle built for a post-Cold War era.

Now, the brigade and the Washington state base where it is located are grappling with one of its own being accused of one of the worst atrocities of the roughly decade-old war in Afghanistan.

The name of the 38-year-old soldier was not released because it would be "inappropriate" to do so before charges are filed, Pentagon spokesman George Little said. The soldier is in custody at a base in Kandahar.

The staff sergeant was deployed Dec. 3 with the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, based at Joint Base Lewis-McChord located south of Seattle, a congressional source told The Associated Press.

The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

The soldier, who has been in the military for 11 years, served three tours in Iraq and is married with two children, was being held in pretrial confinement in Kandahar while Army officials review his complete deployment and medical history, Pentagon officials said.

A U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity because the matter is under investigation said that during a recent tour of duty in Iraq, the suspect was involved in a vehicle accident and suffered a head injury, although information about the extent of the injury wasn't available. The accident was not combat-related, and there was no available indication that his injury could be linked to abnormal behavior after-

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Worries About Radioactive Waste

Tsunami debris floating across Pacific slowly approaches U.S. shores

By Audrey McAvoy
The Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Refrigerators, TVs and other debris dragged into sea when a massive earthquake hit Japan last March, causing tsunamis as high as 130 feet to crash ashore, could show up in remote atolls north of Hawaii as soon as this winter, with other pieces reaching parts of the West Coast in 2013 and 2014, experts say.

Debris from the tsunami initially formed a thick mass in the

ocean of Japan's northeastern coast. But ocean currents have dispersed the pieces so they're now estimated to spread out some 3,000 miles halfway across the Pacific.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said Tuesday the first bits of tsunami debris are estimated to make landfall this winter on small atolls northwest of the main Hawaiian Islands. Other pieces are expected to reach the coasts of Oregon, Washington state, Alaska and Canada

between March 2013 and March 2014.

NOAA's tsunami marine debris coordinator, Ruth Yender, told an online news conference that agency workers were boarding Coast Guard flights that patrol the archipelago. NOAA also asked scientists stationed at Midway and other atolls to look for the debris.

In September, a Russian training ship spotted a refrigerator, a television set and other appliances west of Hawaii. By now, the debris has likely drifted so

far apart that only one object can be seen at a time, said Nikolai Maximenko, a University of Hawaii researcher and ocean currents expert.

Most items likely sank not far from Japan's eastern coast.

One million to 2 million tons of debris remain in the ocean, but only 1 to 5 percent of that could reach American and Canadian shorelines, Maximenko said. The tsunamis that followed the magnitude-9 earthquake generated 20 million to

Sentence Struck Down in Bomb Plot

Ahmed Ressam's case is sent back to NW for harsher sentencing

By Robert Jablon
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A terrorist who plotted to blow up Los Angeles International Airport on the eve of the millennium, now halfway through his 22-year sentence, will have to serve longer after an appeals court ruled Monday that the original punishment did not fit a crime that a judge said could

have rivaled Sept. 11.

In a 7-4 decision, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the government's appeal and sent the case back to a federal judge in Seattle for resentencing for a third time.

The court, which contains some of the nation's most liberal judges, said Ahmed Ressam's plot to blow up the airport on New Year's Eve 1999, was "horrific" and intend-

ed to intimidate the nation and the world.

"Had Ressam succeeded, 'LAX' may well have entered our vocabulary as a term analogous to 'the Oklahoma City bombing' or '9/11,'" Judge Richard R. Clifton wrote for the majority. "His clear intent was to intimidate this nation and the world, and he sought to influence world events and the

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