



Courtesy Jim Dillon

## THE THREE MUSKETEERS

Their families say the trio was inseparable growing up. Now two Lynbrook brothers and their friend are serving together in

Iraq. Pictured are lifelong friends Sgt. Sean Ledwith, left, Medic James Tucker and Sgt. Timothy Ledwith. **Story, page 3.**

# Buddies together on frontline

## Three Lynbrook school chums are serving together in Iraq, at their request

BY MARY MALLOY

"Greetings from Fallujah!" wrote Marine Sgt. Sean Ledwith in a letter home from Iraq to family friend Jim Dillon. "It is very hot here, as you can imagine - about 120 degrees."

Ledwith, 26, is stationed 40 miles west of Baghdad, about 6,000 miles from his home in Lynbrook. But he has familiar faces around him: older brother Timothy, 33, and boyhood friend James Tucker, 25, are stationed there, too. The Ledwith brothers and their long-time friend are with the 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, Alpha Company Unit 72180.

According to Sean and Timothy's father, Lynbrook Village Attorney Peter Ledwith, the three have been friends since grade school at Our Lady of Peace. "They are such good buddies, the three of them," Peter said. "We call them the Three Musketeers. The Tuckers lived only a few blocks from us. They all played sports together with another close friend, Albert Santini." Santini has recently returned from a tour of duty in Iraq.

"Every year, my mother would throw the boys Marine-theme birthday parties," said Laura Ryder, Tim and Sean's older sister. "They dressed in camouflage outfits. Tim would put himself in charge of Sean's parties. Of course, the birthday cakes were decorated with American flags."

Sean and Tim are two of Peter and Susan Ledwith's 10 children. The eldest,

Peter, is a former Marine. He is followed by Chris, Kevin, Laura, Jenny, Timmy, Katie, Sean, Brian and Liam. The two youngest sons attend Valley Forge military college.

Tim joined the Marines a few years after high school, and Sean joined a few years after that. This is the second tour of duty for the brothers, who served together in Iraq for a year and a half until 2005. "Tim had already turned in his papers after that first tour," said their father. "But they had a shortage of sergeants, and he was called back to serve." Tim had already become a fireman, and was assigned to Engine Co. 236 in East New York,

where his grandfather once worked.

Tucker worked in construction before enlisting in the Navy almost three years ago. "He had always talked about joining the military," said his mother, Denise. "He was in the reserves until this first assignment to Iraq."

"I remember James and Sean playing army together since they were toddlers," she said. "They all went to Our Lady of Peace, then to Kellenberg later on."

Tucker has three older brothers, Robert, Timothy and Terrence.

Tucker and the two Ledwith brothers trained for a year at 29 Pines in California, a desert boot camp. When Tucker got his orders, he asked to go with the 25th Marine



Courtesy Ledwith family

**TAKING A BREAK** from the 100-degree-plus heat in Fallujah, Iraq are Timothy Ledwith, James Tucker, and Sean Ledwith.

Division, with Sean and Tim. They, in turn, requested Tucker as their unit's medic. The threesome have been stationed in Fallujah since March. Coalition forces have occupied the town since April 2003.

"They are Lynbrook's all-American boys," said Dillon, a past president of the VFW and a member of the American Legion. "I knew their families well as they were growing up - they're all great kids."

"The paths that their lives have taken are incredible," said Ryder. "They were close growing up, and that bond is still there, as you can see."

At home in Lynbrook, the clock ticks

slowly for the men's families and friends, but luckily, not so for the Three Musketeers. "We are really busy," Sean wrote in his letter to Dillon. "Which is good, because the time goes by pretty quickly ... Please say hello to all the boys at the [VFW] post for us and tell them we look forward to seeing them."

The three are due back in the U.S. in late October.

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