

Soldier's widow charged with child neglect

by UPI

BELLEVILLE, Ill. -- The wife of a U.S. soldier killed in Iraq has been charged with child endangerment after her toddler son was found outside wearing only a diaper. Thelma M. Straughter, 28, of Belleville, Ill., was arrested by police after a neighbor said Straughter's 2-year-old son was wandering outside without clothes in 30-degree temperatures, the Belleville News-Democrat reported Wednesday. Police said they aren't sure how the boy got out of the house. Straughter's husband, Spc. Matthew Straughter, 27, died in Iraq Jan. 31 after a rocket-propelled grenade struck his vehicle. The couple had two children together and each had children from previous relationships, the newspaper said. "It must be terribly overwhelming for her," Kathy Upchurch, president of Gold Star Wives of America, told the News-Democrat. "I know how I felt, and I didn't have children to bathe, feed and clothe." Straughter is free on bond and her children have been placed in foster care.

Copyright © 2008, by United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

Soldier's widow charged with child neglect by UPI