



MOUNTAINEER **DEFENDER**

Magazine of the Virginia National Guard



Farewell!
Saying goodbye to
"Soldier's General"

167th, 130th
members save crash
victims

Joan Jett, Kellie
Pickler visit Kuwait

Former 1092nd
commander honored

WINTER 2011



Magazine of the
West Virginia National Guard
Winter 2011

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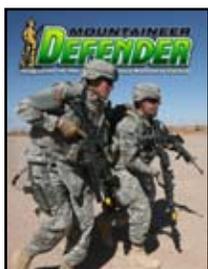
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On the cover:

West Virginia Soldiers and Airmen were called to state active duty in February when heavy snows blanketed the northern and eastern parts of the state. Guard members assisted in clearing roads, delivering supplies, transporting the sick and elderly to medical facilities, and rescuing those stranded without power or heat.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Bryan Stevens, 130th AW Public Affairs



Adjutant General
Maj. Gen. James A. Hoyer

State Senior Enlisted Leader
Command Sgt. Maj.
Lawrence R. Vance

State Command Chief Master Sergeant
Command Chief Master Sgt.
Ronald D. Bowe

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The Adjutant General

Throughout our Nation's history the citizen soldier has answered the call to defend our way of life and protect and support our citizens in time of need.

From the Continental Army to the core of the "Greatest Generation" that achieved success in World War II, the citizen soldier has been the heart and soul of keeping our Nation safe and on focus. Our Nation again is at a crossroads with an enemy that wants to overextend our defense capabilities and bring the fight to our homeland. Once again the citizen soldier will step up, and since September 11, 2001, has stepped up to answer the call.

Our Vision we built with General Tackett, "Fort West Virginia", is more relevant and important than ever before. Carrying out the vision of creating opportunities for West Virginians to support our National Defense and protect the Homeland while living and raising our families in our great state is right on target and right on



Maj. Gen. James A. Hoyer

time at this point in our Nation's history. We can do missions better, faster and more cost effective than anyone else while creating opportunities

here at home.

We must focus on the core components of our success :

- Strength and Readiness for the Warfight
- Family Readiness and Soldier/Airmen Care
- Unique Capabilities (such as National Maintenance Programs and Homeland Defense)

We must always strive to:

- Be Citizen Soldiers at their best!
- Manage challenges and turn them into opportunities!
- Treat our fellow Guardsmen as we treat our own family!

Never forget the heart and soul of the WVNG is our Guardsmen and their families! Their dedication, sacrifice and ingenuity are what set us apart from all others. They their efforts allow us to proudly live the WVNG motto we have adopted from our 167th AW – Mountaineer Pride Worldwide!!

The State Senior Enlisted Leader

Throughout our Nation's history the citizen soldier has answered the call to defend our way of life and protect and support our citizens in time of need. From the Continental Army to the core of the "Greatest Generation" that achieved success in World War II, the citizen soldier has been the heart and soul of keeping our Nation safe and on focus. Our Nation again is at a crossroads with an enemy that wants to overextend our defense capabilities and bring the fight to our homeland. Once again the citizen soldier will step up, and since September 11, 2001, has stepped up to answer the call.

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Homeland while living and raising our families in our great state is right on target and right on time at this point in our Nation's history. We can do missions better, faster and more cost effective than anyone else while creating opportunities here at home.

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Treat our fellow Guardsmen as we treat our own family!their efforts allow us to proudly live



Command Sgt. Maj. Vance

the WVNG motto we have adopted from our 167th AW – Mountaineer Pride Worldwide!!

The State Command Chief Master Sergeant



Command Chief Master Sgt. Bowe

This article I am going to talk about a subject that you all have heard about several times over the last few years. Suicide.

We all take Suicide Awareness training, but

that's just the first step -- we must take immediate action and get involved. We need to lookout for each other and understand that we're not alone. Be willing to assist your Wingman and ask for help when you need it. We must all take the time to care about those around us. That's what good Wingmen do, and that's what our ANG needs.

Supervisors at every level must act now. Get to know your Airmen better and understand their personal and professional challenges. This is not a time to sit idle and think this won't happen in your unit, as we all know we have suffered losses at both wings. No one is immune. Suicides don't know ages, location or career fields.

We need to be good wingmen for others and also need to develop and maintain trusted relationships and friendships where we can talk

openly and honestly about things happening in our own lives.

So many people care about you -- more than you think: family, friends, co-workers, supervisors, commanders, chaplains, medical professionals and senior leaders are ready and willing to listen and help. Just give them a chance.

Don't ever think you are alone or that no one will understand. We will understand, and we will help you. It doesn't matter whether you write, call or e-mail, please reach out. We are an WVNG family and you mean a lot to all of us. If you feel you are at the end of your road, you are not-talk with someone. We care about you and will ensure you receive the help you need. As always I appreciate all you do and what your families do.

Designer drugs pose major risks

by Tech. Sgt. Jessica Cunningham
Prevention, Treatment and
Outreach Program

When you hear the term bath salts what do you think of? Perhaps you think comfort, relaxation, or even rejuvenation. When added to the bath, the grains of salt produce a luxurious experience ... or so use to be the case. Today, Bath Salts are known as a new unregulated psychoactive substance, and are the latest in a series of legal synthetic drugs designed to dodge existing drug laws.

These crystal-like substances do not share the same chemical make-up as those you would add to your bath. These are made from several chemicals including methylenedioxypropylvalerone (MPDV). Often sold on the internet and in head shops, Bath Salts are being produced as substitutes for ecstasy, cocaine and amphetamines.

Bath Salts can be found under several different names. Some include Ivory Wave, Vanilla Sky, Pure Ivory, Bolivian Bath, Hurricane Charlie, Purple Rain, Salt, Crush, Gloom, Whack, Fly, and Crush.

Bath Salts are a pure white to light brown powder with a slight odor. If exposed to air the substance will darken in color and become less potent. Packaged as "soothing bath salts," they are usually sold in 200mg or 500mg packets. Bath Salts often contain the note "not for human consumption" and are sold for \$20 - \$80 depending on the packet size.

Though no specific directions for use are listed on the package, the salts are usually snorted, smoked or swallowed.

Side effects include increased heart rate, agitation, anxiety, lack of appetite,

nosebleeds, fits and delusions. More serious side effects include muscle spasms, increased blood pressure, kidney failure, seizures, muscle damage, loss of bowel control, hallucinations and severe paranoia. It is also important to know that in addition to the list of side effects, Bath Salts have been linked cases to drug induced death and suicide.

Many cities and states have banned this drug. Most recently, the city council in Huntington passed a bill to ban the sale and/or possession of the drug.

Spice -- the fake pot

Spice, also known as K2, has become a drug phenomenon across the country.

While visiting a school recently to discuss the dangers of drugs, I was shocked by the number of children who identified spice potpourri as a drug.

This designer drug, often sold in foil pouches or plastic canisters, has been marketed across the United States as herbal incense. It is sold in small shops and advertised online as a legal high.

Spice is sold as dried leaves and resembles potpourri. It is often smoked as a joint or in pipes, but can also be made into a tea.

Spice claims to be made of a full mixture of herbs and plants, however, the mixture is treated with chemicals that are not only dangerous, but also intoxicating and addictive. *The Times* recently reported the synthetic substance in spice is four to

five times more potent than THC, the main psychoactive compound in cannabis.

Not only does spice produce a high similar to marijuana, it also has side effects such as extreme paranoia, vomiting, panic attacks and hallucinations. At this time, the long-term effects of this drug are unknown.

This drug has been associated with impaired driving, emergency room visits and even suicide attempts.

As of Nov. 5, 2010, thirteen states have banned the use of Spice. Delegate Don Perdue, the House Health and Human Resources Committee chairman, is currently leading the movement to outlaw the harmful substance in West Virginia.

Delegate Perdue stated that although K2 packets carry the warning "Caution: For fragrance purposes only. Not for consumption," people are not buying it for its aroma. He also said that school police are finding empty packets lying in hallways and classrooms.

The U.S. military does not support the use of Spice. According to Army Regulation 600-85, Soldiers are prohibited from using substances for the purpose of inducing excitement, intoxication or stupefaction of the central nervous system. The Air Force Instruction 44-120 states that the knowing use of any intoxicating substance, other than the lawful use of alcohol or tobacco products, that is inhaled, injected, consumed, or introduced into the body in any manner to alter mood or function is prohibited.



West Virginia National Guard Deployment Update

Company C, 1-204th Assault Company is currently deployed to Afghanistan. Soldiers are expected to return later this month.

Members of the **156th Military Police Company** are currently deployed to Afghanistan. Soldiers are expected to return to the Mountain State in early 2012.

1st Battalion, 201st Field Artillery is currently deployed in support of Operation New Dawn. Soldiers are expected to return to West Virginia later this year.

Members of the West Virginia National Guard's **Special Operations Detachment - Europe** have been mobilized for deployment to

Africa. The unit is expected to depart the Mountain State this spring.

Members of **Company C, 1-150th Aviation** have been mobilized for deployment to Kosovo. Soldiers are expected to begin pre-deployment training later this spring.

More than 100 Airmen in the **167th Airlift Wing** remain deployed in support of current military operations in the United States and around the world.

More than 50 Airmen in the **130th Airlift Wing** are deployed around the globe for various AEF/ECS taskings. Airmen will be returning to West Virginia through 2011

Soldiers' general says farewell after 48 years

by Jack Harrison
National Guard Bureau Communications Director

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (January 21, 2011) -- After some 48 years in the West Virginia National Guard, and 15 as the state's adjutant general, Army Maj. Gen. Allen Tackett was honored at an often-times emotional retirement ceremony on Jan. 21.

On the occasion of his retirement, Tackett held the distinction as being the longest-serving adjutant general in the nation.

Several hundred people were in attendance, including West Virginia's two senators, the governor, members of the West Virginia legislature and other elected officials and civic leaders from around the state.

The chief of the National Guard Bureau was also there and spoke at the ceremony about the great journey Tackett and his wife, Sallie Pat, embarked upon together in the 1960s.

"Allen Tackett has been a fixture in the West Virginia Guard since 1963, when he enlisted into the 19th Special Forces Group as a private," said Air Force Gen. Craig McKinley, chief, National Guard Bureau. "He and Sallie Pat have served the state with honor and passion, and I'm sure they will continue as they begin the next chapter of their lives."

McKinley spoke about many of Tackett's achievements during his remarks.

"General Tackett started what has



Lt. Col. Todd Harrell, JFHQ Public Affairs Office
Maj. Gen. Allen Tackett receives an award from the Chief, National Guard Bureau Gen. Craig R. McKinley during his retirement ceremony Jan. 21.

become a world-class Youth ChalleNGE program, setting the standard for other programs to emulate," McKinley said. "He opened the Center for National Response training facility in a highway tunnel on Interstate 77, providing first responders from around the world and from many emergency response disciplines a place to hone their skills in disaster response."

"General Tackett has succeeded at every level," said West Virginia Governor Earl Ray Tomblin. "He faced every circumstance with determination. I am sad he's retiring, but happy for him and his family."

Sen. Jay Rockefeller, the senior senator from West Virginia, presented Tackett with a U.S. flag he had flown over the West Virginia state house and the Pentagon in Arlington, Va.

"This is the first time I've presented anyone such a flag," Rockefeller said. "General Tackett is the best leader the West Virginia National Guard has ever had."

"Allen has become known to the servicemen

and women of West Virginia as the 'Soldiers' General'," McKinley said. "I can also say he is an 'Airmen's General as well,'" the four-star Air Force general continued.

After a moving pictorial and musical tribute, featuring photos capturing Tackett's life and career, it was time for him to address the gathering.

"I spent 25 years dreaming of becoming the adjutant general," Tackett said. "During that time, I was making plans to bring the West Virginia Guard into the 21st century."

He thanked the five governors he served for giving him the opportunity to be adjutant general, and for having faith in him and allowing him to continue in the job.

Then Tackett paid tribute to his wife, Sallie Pat, his children and the rest of his family.

"This has been a labor of love," Tackett said. "I could never have achieved what I have without the tremendous support of my wife and family."

Tackett then turned his attention to his troops.

"This has never been about me," he said. "The West Virginia Guard is really a family. And, I have been honored to serve that family. It's really always been about the Soldiers and Airmen. "



Sgt. Anna-Marie Hizer, JFHQ Public Affairs Office

Maj. Gen. Allen Tackett embraces his wife, Sallie Pat, after she was awarded the Legion of Merit award from W.Va. Governor Earl Ray Tomblin during Tackett's retirement Jan. 22.

Mink Shoals native named 36th W.Va. Adjutant General

by Sgt. Anna-Marie Hizer
JFHQ Public Affairs Office

CHARLESTON, W.Va.
(February 15, 2011) -- "I never figured I would be where I am ..."

Nearly two weeks after his promotion to major general and swearing in as the new Adjutant General for the West Virginia National Guard, Maj. Gen. James Hoyer remarked on the journey toward his new position and the voyage that lies ahead.

Hoyer said he always knew he would be in the military. With two WWII veteran grandfathers, a father who served in the Korean War and a Vietnam veteran uncle, the Mink Shoals native had a family tradition of service. But when he entered the West Virginia National Guard in 1983 with a commission from the Joint Reserve Officer Training Corps program with West Virginia State University, he had no idea he would end up as W.Va.'s 36th TAG.

"I always figured I would do some sort of military service," he said. "But I had no idea I would be where I am."

Following his entrance into the WVNG, Hoyer spent nine years serving as the Executive Assistant/Chief of Staff for the Speaker of the West Virginia House of Delegates. During his tenure, he worked toward getting funding for the Guard with then Col. Allen Tackett.

As Hoyer continued up the ranks in the W.Va. National Guard, he had many opportunities to work with Tackett in many facets of the Guard's Homeland Defense initiatives unfolded. From



Lt. Col. Todd Harrell, JFHQ Public Affairs Office

Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Allen Tackett pins new rank on Maj. Gen. James Hoyer shortly after he was sworn in as the 36th Adjutant General for the state of West Virginia. Hoyer replaces Tackett but said he plans on keeping many of the same initiatives started by W.Va.'s longest-running Adjutant General.

... serving as the commander of the 35th Civil Support Team (Weapons of Mass Destruction) to helping stand up the Joint Interagency Training and Education Center, Hoyer has been a part of the "Fort West Virginia" vision from the beginning.

"He had this vision," Hoyer said. "For us to look and see what the threats were and how we were going to position the Guard was a great opportunity."

In addition to building the National Guard's homeland defense capabilities, Hoyer said another part of Tackett's legacy that he believes strongly in is the importance of taking care of military families -- an often difficult task given the lack of active-duty style facilities and programs in the state.

"It's overwhelming having the full responsibility of taking care of all the Guardsmen and their families," he said.

He added that the increase in jobs and opportunities for Mountain State

Guard members has added to the mission of taking care of families by allowing more Soldiers and Airmen to live, work and raise their families in the state.

As part of taking care of the Guard, Hoyer brought up the fact that the reserve force mission has changed dramatically over the years. No longer "weekend warriors," Army and Air National Guard members are often called upon to not only assist in state missions such as natural disasters, but also deploy to combat zones alongside their active-duty counterparts. The Adjutant General stated that he is a big proponent of service members being well rounded in their training and ready for whatever mission they may be called for.

"I am a believer in the Guard being able to deploy and do the combat mission as well as the homeland defense mission as well as be able to be called out in the state," he said.

Hoyer noted that his leadership style and mission objectives will remain much the same as his predecessor -- building on the Guard's capabilities while taking care of families and adding to the Fort West Virginia concept that helped him rise in responsibility to the level of West Virginia's newest Adjutant General.

"[Tackett] has given me the opportunity to advance," he said. "Now it's my job to do that for the 6,620 people we have in the Guard. If we continue to embrace the vision of Fort West Virginia, we will keep making opportunities and function like a family."



167th Airlift Wing member aids crash victim

by Sgt. Debra Richardson
1-201st Field Artillery

MARTINSBURG, W.Va. (December 17, 2010) -- A flight nurse with the West Virginia Air National Guard's 167th Airlift Wing is being hailed a hero for helping to stabilize an accident victim after a vehicle rollover off Interstate 81 earlier this month.

Air Force Capt. Jodi Pritchard, a flight nurse with the Wing's Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, simply thinks she was in the right place at the right time shortly before noon Dec. 5.

Pritchard was returning to the air base in Martinsburg after making a quick trip to Winchester, Va., to pick up a cheese platter for the unit's Christmas party which was being held that afternoon.

Driving northbound on I-81, she came upon the accident about two miles south of the Inwood exit in Berkeley County.

Bob Reifsnyder, who was driving southbound on I-81, was one of the first people to stop after seeing the 2004 black SUV Ford Explorer roll over several times in the northbound lanes before disappearing over an embankment.

"It kept rolling over five or 10 times," he said of the SUV with New York tags.

Reifsnyder said he crossed the highway and offered assistance to the four occupants of the SUV.

When he arrived on the scene there was a young woman in the front passenger's seat and a three-year-old boy and six-year-old girl strapped in car seats in the back. While the three managed to free themselves from the wreckage, an older woman who was at the wheel of the SUV was pinned behind the steering wheel and dashboard.

The Martinsburg man said that Pritchard arrived and immediately identified herself as a paramedic and began to assist at the scene.

He said Pritchard climbed inside the SUV and assisted the woman who was trapped. He noted that she provided care



PRITCHARD

to the woman before emergency rescue personnel arrived.

"We pried the passenger door open a little more and I slid in and got to the driver," she said. "The steering wheel and dash were collapsed on her legs."

The Airman recalled how she tried to calm the woman and reassure her that help was on the way.

After a quick visual assessment of the victim, Pritchard determined that the woman was not suffering from any major injury although she was bleeding from the head.

"I made sure that she was coherent," Pritchard said. "She complained of her arms hurting."

The flight nurse said she explained to the woman what was going to happen when the fire department and EMS personnel arrived.

As the Jaws of Life were used to extricate the woman from the wreckage, Pritchard stayed in the SUV and held the woman's head to stabilize her spine.

"They asked me if I would be okay staying inside [the SUV] while they were cutting the vehicle apart and I said yes,"

the flight nurse said.

Pritchard said she knew everyone at the scene from the Berkeley County Fire Company and Berkeley County Emergency Ambulance Authority.

As a flight nurse for PHI AirCare Medevac based in Winchester, Pritchard is no stranger to the local EMS and firefighters as she provides emergency care aboard the Medevac helicopters contracted with the Winchester Medical Center.

After the woman was extricated from the twisted SUV she was taken by ambulance to the hospital in Winchester.

Pritchard said she never knew the woman's name, but Reifsnyder said he's sure the accident victim will never forget how a member of the local Air National Guard came to her rescue in a time of personal crisis.

"The woman was very grateful to Captain Pritchard," Reifsnyder said.

And he himself called the young flight nurse "a credit to the Air Force and the community."

Reifsnyder said Pritchard's quick actions gave him a firsthand glimpse into how Guardsmen are trained to respond at a moment's notice to a crisis. Pritchard has been a member of the 167th Airlift Wing since February 1998.

"I just can't say enough about what she did to help that woman who was trapped," he said.

For her part, Pritchard said the real heroes are the Berkeley County EMS and firefighters who respond to accident scenes on a daily basis.

"They were phenomenal in their performance that afternoon," she said. "They are true professionals 100 percent."

Trooper T.W. Cook, the investigating officer at the accident scene from the West Virginia State Police, said Pritchard was assisting EMS stabilizing the driver inside the SUV when he arrived.

"It's nice to see people care enough to stop when they see people in need," Cook said



Sgt. Anna-Marie Hizer, JFHQ Public Affairs Office

Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Allen E. Tackett and his wife, Sallie Pat, cut the ribbon officially opening the new Family Readiness Center, named in their honor.



Sgt. Anna-Marie Hizer, JFHQ Public Affairs Office



Sg

(Left) Soldiers with the 1092nd exit the air a year-long deployment to Afghanistan. (after walking off the airplane at Fort McC

(Below) Chief Master Sgt. David L. Widmeyer was surrounded by friends and Eric Widmeyer, during a retirement cerem



Lt. Col. Todd Harrell, JFHQ Public Affairs Office

Soldiers with the W.Va. National Guard's 156th Military Police Detachment, along with employers from around the state, participate in a BOSS lift at Fort Bliss, Texas. The event, sponsored by Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, helps civilian employees gain a better understanding of what their citizen-Soldiers do while deployed.



Lt. Col. Todd Harrell, JFHQ Public Affairs Office



Photo by Lt. Anna-Marie Hizer, JFHQ Public Affairs Office

...plane at Fort McCoy, Wisc. after
(Above) Sgt. Josh Britton smiles
...y.

...meyer retired after nearly 42
...n Airlift Wing in Martinsburg.
...family, including his son, Maj.
...ony Feb. 18.



An Airman participating in Emergency Management training at the Center for National Response (Memorial Tunnel) takes a sample to determine the contents of an overturned barrel.



Air Force Lt. Col. David Lester, JFHQ Public Affairs Officer



Sgt. Debra Richardson, 1-201st FA

Spc. Joe McDaniel, a medic with the 201st Field Artillery Regiment, Task Force 201, West Virginia National Guard, at Camp Buehring, Kuwait carefully uses icing as an adhesive while constructing a gingerbread house during the USO sponsored gingerbread housebuilding competition.

Capt. Leonard Nida explains a portion of the proposed Boy Scouts of America Layout to Sen. Joe Manchin during a meeting in Glen Jean, W.Va. The Boy Scouts are scheduled to hold their Jamboree in West Virginia in 2013.



Air Force Lt. Col. Mike Cadle

(Below) Maj. Gen. James Hoyer, the adjutant general, pins an award on Sgt. Major Larry Becher after receiving a recruiting award during the annual West Virginia Army National Guard's recruiting and retention banquet on Feb. 12 in Charleston, W.Va.



Spc. Sara Yoke, 153rd Public Affairs Detachment

Making a difference

“Guardian angel” saves life, limb of local woman

by Sgt. Anna-Marie Hizer
JFHQ Public Affairs Office

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (February 15, 2011) -- Friday the 13th was indeed a fateful day for a young college student driving home after a day of soaking up the southern West Virginia sun with a friend.

On the evening of Aug 13, 2010, Tech. Sgt. Roy Akers, a Civil Engineering Squadron member with the West Virginia Air National Guard's 130th Airlift Wing, located in Charleston W.Va., was driving home near Indian Creek, W.Va. after visiting his mother. He came around a turn and saw several vehicles stopped in the road. A car had wrecked, flipping four times, and settled near the side of the road on its roof. The young woman trapped inside needed help.

“People were running toward her car,” Akers said. “The car was on its top and she was sitting inside the car on the ground.” He added that it didn't appear she had been

wearing a seatbelt.

When Akers got closer to the vehicle, he noticed the woman's arm was gone -- nearly to her shoulder. That is when Akers went to work.

“I said ‘we have to stop that bleeding right now.’” Akers said. “I slid her out of her car and I just clamped right down ... I was looking right in her eyes ... she kept saying she was sorry.”

Akers said he tried to hide the remains of her arm, not knowing if she was aware it had been amputated, and not wanting her to panic. Soon, others on the scene began to assist him.

“A lady came up, she was an EMT. She saw what I was dealing with and found a belt,” he said.

In addition to the belt, another person called 9-1-1 while others searched the hillside for the arm. Through it all, Akers held pressure on the girl's wound and talked to her, trying to keep her alert.

“She said she thought she was going to die,” he said. “I told her ‘no, you're not.’”

“She told me her name was Ashley and I thought ‘oh God ...’ my daughter's name is Ashley.”

It took approximately 35 minutes for the ambulance to get to the accident scene. Paramedics relieved Akers and tended to 24-year-old Ashley Parker, who was taken to Pittsburgh for surgery. Akers went home and prepared for a trip with his wife to their cabin. But he could not get Ashley off his mind.

“I just felt that I had to find out,” he said. “Wednesday, after the accident, her mother called me.”

“I do remember a man's voice ...” Parker said.

“I was leaving a



Tech. Sgt. Andrew LaMoreaux, 130th AW Public Affairs

Tech. Sgt. Roy Akers, Civil Engineering Squadron, 130th Airlift Wing, poses with Ashley Parker. Akers attended to Parker when she crashed her car Aug. 13, 2011.

friend's house. I don't remember getting in my car, I don't remember the car flipping, I don't remember losing my arm ... but I do remember a man's voice,” she said.

Parker also doesn't remember the 12-hour surgery she endured to reattach her arm. Doctors kept her in an induced coma for six days while they performed nearly daily operations trying to make sure her limb was clean and circulation was functioning.

“I have had skin grafts, muscle grafts,” she said. “The arm was found 30 feet behind the car in a ditch.”

However, she noted that one thing seemed to stay with her, even before she knew about Akers.

“Every time I went into surgery, I would see these [blue] eyes,” she said. “His eyes. I know it sounds cliché, but it was like he was watching over me.”

It took Parker nearly three weeks in the hospital before she realized how severe her injuries were. She said family members kept telling her about the man who had pulled her out of her wrecked vehicle.

“Having somebody that you don't know from Adam get out of their car and rescue



Tech. Sgt. Eugene Crist 130th AW Public Affairs

Tech. Sgt. Roy Akers, points out where Ashley Parker's arm was severed in a car crash last summer. Despite the traumatic injury, doctors were able to reattach her arm. Through physical therapy and additional operations, Parker has regained some function down through her wrist.

you,” she said. “He is my guardian angel.”

After only a month in the hospital, and nearly 30 surgeries, Ashley went home. It was then that the events set in motion for the two strangers ... bonded by near tragedy, to meet.

“He left me a letter on my door,” Parker said with a smile. “He was excited I was home and well.”

“When I saw her, she was there ... talking on her cell phone and all vivacious,” Akers noted with a laugh.

Both noted that their first meeting was overwhelming.

“I grabbed him and we hugged for like, 10 minutes,” Parker said. “I cried, he cried, the feeling was unexplainable. To have someone you don’t know care that much about you.”

The two now keep in regular contact. Parker updates Akers on her progress in physical therapy -- milestones such as being able to move her wrist again. She also tells Akers about her brother, an Army



Tech. Sgt. Eugene Crist 130th AW Public Affairs
Tech. Sgt. Roy Akers, Civil Engineering Squadron, 130th Airlift Wing, poses with Ashley Parker. Akers attended to Parker when she crashed her car Aug. 13, 2011.

Ranger currently deployed to Afghanistan. Parker noted that her brother can hardly wait to meet Akers (a former Ranger himself), and shake the hand of the man who saved his sister.

Parker’s mother is also very thankful that Akers was on the road that day.

“My son is over there [in Afghanistan],” said Patricia Parker. “I’ve tried to put that out of my mind, never thinking [the danger] would be here ... my daughter.”

And Ashley said she will always think of him as family. “I feel so blessed to have him in my life,” she said. “His family, his mom, his kids, they’re all a part of our life now. He’s my hero.”

The humble Akers looks at it differently; noting that his military training -- both in the Army, and now the Air National Guard -- allowed him to act in the situation.

“You just react. I knew what to do,” he said. All I did was squeeze ... she’s the amazing one.”

But for one young woman, the West Virginia Air National Guard member who stopped along a winding West Virginia road on a balmy Friday the 13th and squeezed her arm will forever hold a special place in her heart.

“If it wasn’t for that man, I wouldn’t be sitting here right now,” Ashley said as she fought off tears. “I can’t thank him enough, I can’t hug him enough, I can’t tell him I love him enough.”

130th member eyes Big East championship

by Derek Denny
The Daily Athenaeum

A year ago, Terina Miller was an armed security guard at a United States military base in Saudi Arabia.

Now, the redshirt sophomore finds herself pursuing Big East Conference Championships as a thrower.

The past three years have been quite an adventure for the Short Creek, W.Va., native. In addition to being a member of the WVU track team and majoring in criminol-

ogy and investigations, Miller is a member of 130th Airlift Wing of the West Virginia Air National Guard where she has served since graduating from Brooke High School in 2008.

“I joined to make my family proud,” Miller said. “My family has a military background, and it’s been a dream of mine to serve this country.”

Miller endured basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, the summer after graduating high school -- an experience she called “life changing.”

“It was intense, but I adjusted,” Miller said. “It has helped me in everything that I have done since.”

That includes her performance as a Mountaineer. Miller enrolled at WVU after completing basic training and joined the Mountaineers’ track team, hoping to continue the passion she built for the sport in high school.

She made the team, and her career showed promise after finishing in 13th place in the 20-pound throw at the 2008 State Farm Games.

However, the progress she made was put on hold when she found out she would be deployed to serve in Saudi Arabia.

Her service forced her to redshirt the 2009 season to avoid losing any eligibility.

“It wasn’t like I had a choice,” Miller

said. “I knew this was a possibility when I signed up.”

There, as an armed guard, she performed security checks on everyone attempting to enter the base.

“It was a really serious position,” she said.

Miller returned to the WVU campus a changed person, according to Mountaineer head coach Sean Cleary and throwing coach Matt Conly.

Both said Miller’s self-discipline and work ethic has made her a leader for the team.

“You can definitely see how the military has shaped her,” Conly said. “Terina is really special. Her ability to lead and give or take orders sets her apart.”

Miller said she is looking to do her part in fulfilling the team goals of earning a title at the Big East Outdoor Championships in May.

That’s the typical attitude for Miller, according to Conly.

“She is a true leader, in every sense of the word,” he said. “She is capable of anything. It’s an honor to have her on our team.”

“I wouldn’t change anything. Everything I’ve been through has made me a stronger person,” Miller said. “I’m just glad it all worked out.”



Matt Sunday, The Daily Athenaeum

Terina Miller, West Virginia track team and 130th Airlift Wing, W.Va. Air National Guard member, competes in the WVU State Farm Games in January.

Joan Jett, Kellie Pickler rock Camp Buehring

by Sgt. Debra Richardson
1-201st Field Artillery

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait (January 9, 2011) -- More than four hundred Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines stormed the Camp Buehring picnic tables an hour before the concert started in an attempt to obtain front row seats Jan. 9.

Hard rocker Joan Jett and country music artist Kellie Pickler conducted a two-hour show here as part of a week-long USO entertainment tour for American Armed Forces serving in the Middle East.

Both Jett and Pickler are USO veterans, having participated in three and four previous tours respectively.

"It was nice to hear that country twang

again," said Spc. Jeremiah Morgan, an intelligence specialist assigned to 1st Battalion, 201st Field Artillery Battalion.

As the night wore on, the crowd grew louder, as soldiers sang along and clapped to the beat of the songs. Before Pickler relinquished the stage to the much anticipated Joan Jett, she encouraged a Marine to join her on the stage to sing her chart breaking single, "Red High Heels."

While Pickler provided comic relief, Jett altered the atmosphere, energetically dancing around the stage with her guitar while encouraging interaction from the audience.

"It's just me, my guitar and this keyboard so I need all of you to help me sing," shouted Jett to the head banging crowd during her guitar solo in "I Love Rock and Roll."

"She was really in tune with the audience and received a lot of participation from the crowd," said Chief



Sgt. Debra Richardson, 1-201st FA
(Above) Country music artist Kellie Pickler performs for service members at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Jan. 9. (Below left) Rocker Joan Jett wows the crowd at Camp Buehring. Pickler and Jett stopped at Buehring as part of their USO tour.



Warrant Officer 4 Ralph Wegner, from Stratford, New Hampshire. "I grew up listening to her during her hay day."

Soldiers were hesitant to leave after receiving autographs by both artists and CD's from Jett. Soldiers stood outside for over three hours so they could wave goodbye to the artists as they left Buehring.

"Jett is one of those artists you just hope and pray that one day you can hear in a live concert," said Spc. Joel Richardson, Company C, 1st Battalion, 20st Field Artillery, from Morgantown, W.Va. "I'm so excited I saw her live and I'm even happier she lived up to my expectations. She was amazing!"

Video chat closes 7,000-mile gap for Soldier, newborn

by Sgt. Debra Richardson
1-201st Field Artillery

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait -- For most parents, the birth of a child is a joyful time and quite possibly, the biggest event of their lives. A newborn, especially the first born, is a huge affair as family members gather with excitement and love to congratulate the new parents and welcome the new child. But for many deployed Soldiers, like Spc. Patrick Rossi, experiencing the birth of a child has taken a new form.

"My commander gave me the day off, and I was able to watch the birth of my daughter through Yahoo video chat," explained Rossi. "My wife, Kayla, was in labor for 16 hours and it was the longest amount of time I've ever spent starring at a computer screen. I actually fell asleep at

one point and Staff Sergeant John Stevens woke me up."

Stevens is Rossi's father-in-law and both soldiers are currently deployed to Camp Buehring, Kuwait with the 1st Battalion, 201st Field Artillery, West Virginia National Guard. This is Stevens' third granddaughter.

"When I deployed, Kayla moved in with her mother so they wouldn't be lonely and her mom is a great help with little Natalia," Rossi said. "Natalia Ashlyn has dark brown hair and the prettiest set of green eyes. It's still early, she's only nine days old, her eyes could change colors but I hope they stay green. She looks just like my wife, thank God."

Rossi says he feels fortunate. While at Buehring, he can see his daughter every day and watch her grow.

"I talk to her through the computer

microphone," admits Rossi shyly. "No words, just coo's and the normal gibberish dotting parents spout to their babies."

Because of the deployment, Rossi will receive his ten days of paternity leave after he returns. "I had the option to take my two weeks leave around the time we expected her to be born, but my wife and I had already made plans for me to take my leave in March so I settled for video chat."

While Kuwait may be considered a safe zone, the multitude of Soldiers stationed here still endure sacrifices. Rossi, a 21 year-old soldier on his first deployment, is sacrificing 10 months without his first-born child. While technology eases the burden, it is a sacrifice, no less.

"I'm grateful and thankful for all I've been given," explains Rossi. "My daughter is healthy, my wife is happy and I have video chat at my fingertips."

West Virginia Soldiers, churches team up for orphans

by **Martina Hart**
Living City Magazine

When his co-workers at international Coal Group in Charleston, West Virginia approached Maj. John C. “Max” Wilkinson with their idea to send care packages to him and his fellow Soldiers currently serving in Afghanistan, he suggested providing help for a nearby orphanage instead.

“I told them our living conditions were not that bad,” Wilkinson recalls. “And that if they really wanted to make a difference they could help us give these orphans a better quality of life.”

Word soon spread to his friends at the Basilica of Sacred Heart and the St. Thomas More Catholic Lawyers Society.

Around the same time, the parents of Maj. Fred Hill contacted him on behalf of their community at United Methodist Temple in Beckley, W.Va., where Hill grew up, to find out what they could do to assist him and his colleagues, and received the same response.

Wilkinson and Hill serve as executive officer and operations officer with the W.Va. National Guard’s 1092nd Engineer Battalion. The task force was made up of approximately 900 Soldiers from across the United States.

They had an excellent rapport with the Sharana orphanage and its director, Mr. Khan. The orphanage is home to about 40 boys from 5 to 15 years of age. It is estimated that 200 orphans, some of whom come from outlying villages, live in town.

“Their living conditions are austere,” Wilkinson says. “All share a single room in the current orphanage building, sleep on a blanket on the floor, and essentially have nothing other than the clothes on their backs.”

The children receive lessons at the orphanage and, when old enough, attend a local school. They eat a rice-based diet and only have rudimentary medical care.

“Our medics provide periodic clinic services to advise who needs more serious medical attention, which the orphanage coordinates with the local hospital,” Wilkinson said.

Work has begun on a new one-story orphanage building, which will be able to accommodate up to 100 orphans in eight dorm rooms. It will also have two classrooms, two offices, a library, kitchen,



Martina Hart

Members of the 1092nd Engineer Battalion, West Virginia National Guard pose with children from the Sharana Orphanage in southeastern Afghanistan. Soldiers received donations from West Virginia churches and businesses to help improve conditions and morale at the orphanage.

laundry and a shower-latrine.

After determining what the children currently living in the orphanage would need most, Ann Weimer at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, Joy Hill and Mary Thomas at United Methodist Temple, and Karen Berrian at ICG coordinated the project.

Basilica people filled 17 boxes with shirts, pants, shoes and other essential items, as well as soccer balls and volleyballs.

“It was exciting just coming together and trying to learn a little bit more about Afghanistan, what our troops are actually doing over there,” Weimer said.

“Those who were involved in sorting, gathering and packing had lots of questions and were trying to envision what the boys would look like in the clothes.”

Members of the United Methodist Temple sent winter jackets, gloves and about 80 blankets made by children during their Vacation Bible School.

“It was both heartwarming and overwhelming to witness the generosity and love of our members who joined in to clothe and help complete strangers in another part of the world,” Hill said.

“It is a blessing to know that God’s love allows us to reach out to strangers in a land where there is war and that our reaching out can be used by God to help bring about

peace,” Thomas added. “It is awesome to see the smiles on the faces of these Afghan children, as they know that others care for them.”

ICG employees filled nine boxes with clothes, including baseball uniforms and also gloves, bats, balls and bases. “To raise funds the company had a ‘Red, White and Blue Big Denim Day,’ where employees paid to wear jeans and/or tennis shoes to work,” explains Berrian. “We are proud of the work Max is doing in Afghanistan and his interest in helping the children living in the orphanage.”

The packages arrived at Sharana a couple of weeks later, still in time for baseball tutorials. “The kids were ecstatic,” Wilkinson reports, after he and his fellow soldiers returned from distributing the gifts, noting that even the orphanage director was visibly touched. “He is usually pretty stoic, but his face lit up in huge smiles several times when the kids reacted to the gifts.”

Wilkinson says that it has been a great opportunity for Christians and Muslims to work together. “I told Mr. Khan that the Christian Holy Bible, as the Muslim Holy Qur’an, commands that we care for the orphan,” he says. “And that the Christians who sent the gifts were honored to assist in love for these orphans alongside their Muslim friends.”

Parkersburg Armory addition dedicated

Building named in honor of leader, friend

by Sgt. Anna-Marie Hizer
JFHQ Public Affairs Office

PARKERSBURG, W.Va. (March 5, 2011) -- Members of the West Virginia National Guard's 1092nd Engineer Battalion honored one of their own March 5 with a building dedication.

The addition to the Armory in Parkersburg, W.Va. was named in honor of Col. (Ret.) Rick Walker, who served with the 1092nd and its parent brigade, the 111th Engineer Brigade, for the majority of his 32-year career. He commanded the 1092nd from 2001-2002 prior to retiring in 2003. In December, 2004, Walker lost his four-year battle with cancer.

"When you talk about what a leader should be, that's what Colonel Walker was," said Maj. Gen. Melvin Burch, Assistant Adjutant General for Installations and Homeland Defense. "I can't think of a ... better friend."

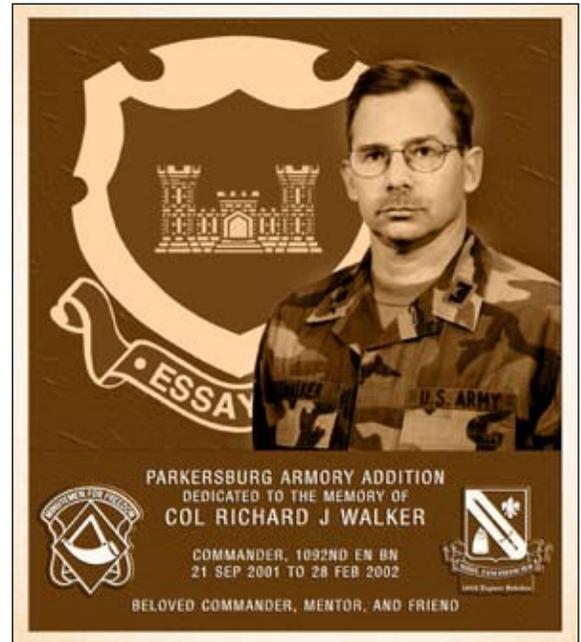
The 2,600 square foot addition was

completed in 2010 and houses the 193rd Engineer Platoon and Detachment 1, 119th Sapper Company. It also includes offices and a conference room.

Walker began his career in the National Guard when he enlisted in 1971. Seven years later he completed officer training and was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant platoon leader with the then-119th Eng. Co. From there, he moved through the ranks within the engineer community and the W.Va. National Guard. His wife, Nancy, commented on how much the Guard meant to him.

"This is a great honor ... he loved the Guard and he loved the people he worked with," she said. Nancy added that without the friends her husband had made, she doubted he would have gone on to become an officer or earn his Master's Degree.

Burch commented on the decision to dedicate the building after Walker, noting



that not many of the facilities in the W.Va. National Guard are named for former members.

"He was the essence of what an Army leader should be," Burch said. "He had a sincere appreciation for the work of his Soldiers."



Spc. Sara Yoke, 153rd Public Affairs Detachment



(Above) Flowers are given to the late Col. Rick Walker's wife Nancy after a building addition at the Parkersburg armory was dedicated to him, March 5, 2011. (Right) Brig. Gen. Melvin Burch talks about his colleague and friend at the building dedication.

Roving grocery helps military families

by Ashley B. Craig
Daily Mail Staff

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (February 6, 2011) -- For military families, the best deals on groceries can be found at their local armory as the West Virginia National Guard's roving commissary moves throughout the state.

Military personnel and their families wandered around the large hall Sunday afternoon at the National Guard Armory in Charleston scouting out discounted groceries. Some came prepared with lists and coupons while others just stopped in to grab a few things.

Sharon Peters, the wife of a retired Airman and program manager for the West Virginia Air National Guard's Airman and Family Readiness Program, pushed her cart around the large hall, maneuvering around the makeshift aisles set up by volunteers. She said the temporary commissary has grown over the years both in the quality of the goods and the supply.

"It's not as extensive as what you would find in a regular commissary on a base but it's a pretty good selection and it's grown a lot," Peters said. "You can definitely get some good bargains."

Service personnel, both active and retired, and their families are entitled to deep discounts when shopping at commissary locations, said Army Staff Sgt. Jenny Mae Pridemore, who assists with the commissary planning.

The state has only one full time military commissary located at the Naval Information Operations Command base in Sugar Grove in Pendleton County, but with the growing number of military families in the state, the National Guard worked to find a way to extend some of the perks of having a base nearby. One of the perks included having a commissary nearby where military families could shop at a discount.

"We've got everything here from cereal and Crisco to laundry detergent, fresh meats, and cleaning supplies," Pridemore said. "Events like this are very well attended because it's very much needed."

"We don't have easy access to a commissary in West Virginia and with the economy the way it is everyone is having a tough time. The soldiers and the airmen really need this support."



Bob Wojcieszak, Charleston Daily Mail

Sgt. Maj. Larry Becher stocks up on supplies at the temporary commissary sale Sunday at the National Guard Armory on Coonskin Drive in Charleston. The goods were brought in from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio and sold to military personnel, active and retired, and their families at discounted rates.

Three tractor-trailer loads of food and other household supplies from the commissary at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, were unloaded at the armory to be sold over the weekend.

Early estimates put between 300 and 400 shoppers at the facility over the weekend.

Pridemore said the commissary staff at Wright-Patterson has been easy to work with and that they have begun tailoring their supply for the temporary sale by the area where the sale will be held.

"They've done it enough to know what to bring to what areas," she said. "Some areas have specific wants and needs, so when we have our sale in Eleanor the supply they send for that event will have some of the same items and some different items."

Sgt. Maj. Larry Becher of Teays Valley had a cart full of goodies Sunday, ranging from cleaning supplies to Oatmeal Creme Pies for his two children. Becher, who serves in the Army National Guard, is on active duty and works at the Charleston Armory supervising the recruiting force.

He didn't prepare for Sunday's shopping trip and was working from memory, just picking up a few odds and ends.

"Normally when we have events like this I'll prepare, you know, ask everyone at home what do we need," he said. "Other times, like today, I'll just pick up what I think we need or call home to check."

1st Lt. Matt Izzo and his wife Susan shopped Sunday with their two teenage

sons while their other two children stayed at home. The two boys talked about getting Count Chocula and Boo Berry cereal.

Sally Pat Tackett, wife of retired Maj. Gen. Allen E. Tackett, worked at the commissary sale, selling hot dogs to raise money for the National Guard's many family programs. She's also a commissary shopper.

"This is one of the best things we could ever do for our military families, to bring the commissary to them," she said.

She said some families have driven to different military installations across state lines in the past to shop at the commissary on base. Over the weekend, state military personnel and their families made the trip from Parkersburg and Ripley to Charleston to shop at the temporary commissary.

State Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Vance, who also serves as the senior enlisted leader for the W.Va. National Guard, said that the roving commissary was the "next best thing" to having a permanent site.

"We try to do this periodically across the state," he said. "This is how we support our families and how we say thank you to our retirees."

There are several other temporary commissary events planned for the year at the different armories across the state.

"We're trying to do as many as we can and we're hoping to increase the frequency of the sales for our people," Vance said.

News You Can Use

Tax solutions from Military OneSource

Military OneSource is pleased to announce that they are once again providing free tax consultation and free on-line tax filing services to service members and their families. Participants will have free online access to the H&R Block At Home Basic tax product.

For more information, please visit www.militaryonesource.com.

Free tutor service available to military families

The Defense Department offers military families access to free, online tutoring at Tutor.com. The site offers professional tutors who can assist with homework, studying and test preparation. Services are

available to students of any age -- from kindergartners to high school seniors -- with help offered in more than 16 subjects.

Once online, the student and tutor work together in a virtual classroom, where they can chat, draw on a shared whiteboard, upload files and browse the Internet together.

Active-duty servicemembers, National Guard and reserve personnel on active duty in a deployed status, Defense Department civilians in a deployed status and their dependents are eligible to participate. Families who aren't eligible can access the service for a fee.

People can sign up by visiting <http://www.tutor.com/military>.

Walt Disney Orlando tickets for military members, retirees

From Oct. 24, 2010 to Oct. 1, 2011, active and retired U.S. military, National

Guard or Reserves, may purchase four-day Walt Disney World Armed Forces Salute tickets for themselves and up to five family members or friends for \$138 per individual.

Three-day passes may also be purchased for \$99 each.

For more information, visit <http://www.shadesofgreen.org/4day.PNG>.

Operation Homefront

An organization entitled "Operation Homefront" has announced the expansion of their 2011 Military Child of the Year Award and opening of the nomination period. Beginning in 2011, the award will be given to an outstanding military child from each Service. Nominations are being accepted until January 31. Additional information is available at <http://www.homefrontonline.com/article.asp?articleid=1888>.