

When duty called, these NATIONAL GUARD members went ...

# Above & beyond

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## Ohio Guardsman honored for courage under fire



Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland awards the Silver Star Medal to Sgt. 1st Class Mark A. Wanner of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group, at the Ohio Statehouse on Feb. 6, 2010. (Photo by Spc. Ryan Cleary, Ohio National Guard)

OH NG, Feb 10: On Feb. 6, the Ohio Army National Guard Special Forces Sgt. 1st Class Mark Wanner received the Silver Star Medal—the nation’s third highest medal for valor in combat.

Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland and Maj. Gen. Gregory L. Wayt, the adjutant general of Ohio, were on hand to present Wanner with the medal. It is the first such award for an Ohio National Guard member since the Korean War.

“We are in the presence of greatness today,” Strickland said. “Many people live their entire lives wondering if they’ve made a difference. But Sergeant First Class Mark Wanner never has to worry about that, does he?”

Fighting back tears, Sgt. 1st Class Sean Clifton recounted the day he almost lost his life after being shot multiple times during a raid on a Taliban compound in eastern Afghanistan.

“I’m standing here today, alive, because of the heroic and competent actions Mark performed on the night of May 31, 2009 -- Memorial Day,” Clifton said.

Clifton and his team had received word that a known Taliban leader would soon be meeting with about a half dozen Taliban fighters at a known location in a nearby village.

After waiting for five days with what Wanner referred to as “tactical patience,” the team received word that their target was in position. It had been training with their Afghan counterparts for nearly five months and the plan was to allow the Afghans to take the lead and follow shortly behind.

But when the team approached the village, the Afghans were already in trouble and the situation was deteriorating quickly. They had expected five or six Taliban fighters, but there were at least 30. They reacted immediately.

“I led some guys into a doorway and that just happened to be the room that had 80 percent of the threat,” Clifton said. “I knew something wasn’t quite right. Then I got hit.”

Clifton had taken at least four rounds. The first entered his pelvis just below his body armor, the second impacted the chest plate of his body armor, the third shattered his left forearm and the last round hit his helmet, knocking off his night vision goggles.

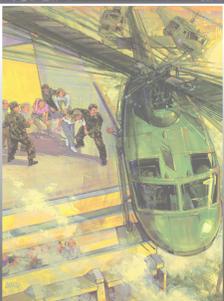
When he saw his arm and realized his rifle had dropped down in front of him, he knew he was in trouble. He headed back out and almost immediately ran into Sgt. 1st Class Matt Scheaffer, a team medic. Wanner, the team’s senior medic, realizing Clifton was hit, immediately ran to assist Scheaffer.

Rounds splashed the ground around them as they began working on their wounded comrade. Realizing the danger to their patient, they quickly dragged him around to what they assumed was the safer side of the building.

As the two medics continued to work on Clifton, Wanner began to realize the extent of his wounds. He knew they couldn’t move their patient unless they had a stretcher, so he ran to the vehicle to retrieve one.

As he returned, they began receiving fire

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from a window about 15 feet away, forcing them to press up against the wall of the building. As he continued to work on Clifton, Wanner coordinated suppressing fire on the window and told Scheaffer to grab the fragmentation grenade on the back of his body armor.

Scheaffer tossed the grenade into the window from which they were taking fire. The tactic worked. It subdued the enemy long enough for the medics to race Clifton to a vehicle for evacuation.

Wanner continued to provide life-saving care as they bounced across the desert to a medical evacuation site, avoiding the main routes they knew to be laced with roadside bombs.

When the medical evacuation helicopters arrived, Wanner boarded the one carrying his Soldier-turned-patient and didn't leave his side until Clifton was transported to the U.S. Army hospital at Landstuhl, Germany, three days later.

"He was there every step of the way, ensuring I was receiving the best possible care," Clifton said. "He assisted the flight surgeon in the medevac, the trauma surgeons in the (operating room) and even helped out a wounded Soldier that lay next to me. That's Mark ... always going over and above the call of duty."

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## California Guardsman saves motorcyclist after crash

CA NG: Jan 10: Master Sgt. Michael Kenny, a Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape specialist with the 129th Rescue Wing, California Air National Guard, was riding his bicycle to work, when shortly after passing through a base security gate he noticed a strange reflection on the bike trail.

Since there was no illumination, Kenny almost did not identify the license plate laying on the trail. As he picked up the plate to deliver it to the gate, his bike light flashed over another shiny object out in the field between the road and base fence. Kenny investigated and noticed a motorcycle and a person lying even further in the field.

Kenny ran to the person to assess their condition and identified the individual as a male rider of the wrecked motorcycle. He determined that the man was conscious and not oriented to time, place or location.

Kenny rode to the gate and notified the on-duty officer. Then he rode back to the motorcycle rider and provided medical assistance and kept him warm during the 20 minute wait for medics to arrive. Kenny talked to the victim keeping him conscious as the temperature that night had dropped to below 40 degrees.

Because he took the time to investigate the license plate on the ground, Kenny was able to

provide critical assistance to a person in need.

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## W. Virginians use innovative method to rescue mom, baby



Spc. Derek C. Folk, left, and Staff Sgt. Harry F. Accor III, two medics with the West Virginia National Guard, employed hand-made snowshoes to rescue a mother and her four-week-old premature baby stranded in their home without power due to back-to-back blizzards in Morgan County, West Virginia, Feb. 10, 2010. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Sherree Grebenstein.)

WV NG, Feb 10: Necessity has often been called the mother of invention.

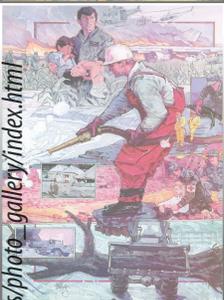
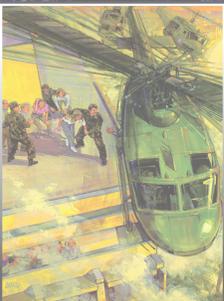
Just ask two West Virginia National Guard Soldiers who found themselves attempting to rescue a mother and her four-week-old premature baby stranded at their home in Morgan County, W.Va.

The mother and her baby became isolated thanks to back-to-back blizzards that socked the region with more than three feet of snow in some areas.

To reach the pair in the early morning hours of Feb. 10, Staff Sgt. Harry F. Accor III and Spc. Derek C. Folk, two medics with the 201st Field Artillery Battalion based in Fairmont, W.Va., fashioned two pairs of snowshoes from pine tree branches and clothes lines.

What makes the feat perhaps even more amazing is that Folk performed the rescue with three bones broken in his right hand. He sustained

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State Mission Series. Available at [www.ngb.army.mil/resources/photo-gallery/index.html](http://www.ngb.army.mil/resources/photo-gallery/index.html)

the injury earlier in the week while helping to evacuate a bi-lateral amputee with diabetes from his home.

Both Soldiers were innovative in their efforts to rescue the trapped mother and baby, said Maj. Chris Nasser, West Virginia Air National Guard's military liaison officer at the Morgan County emergency services complex.

"They made their own handmade snowshoes to evacuate them," Nasser said. "They were really prepared for whatever they faced."

A concerned neighbor alerted officials to help the mother and baby who were living in an area that had been without power for two days, Accor said.

Because the snow was so deep - up to eight-foot snow drifts in some places - the Soldiers were forced to hike about three miles up a ridge to the home. The only way they could maneuver through the snow without sinking was on the snowshoes.

Getting the mother and baby back down the ridge to a waiting Humvee was just as tricky.

"The child was already wrapped," Accor recalled. Both men said they never stopped to learn the woman's name or even the sex of the baby as they were on a mission.

"We just wanted to get them out of there to safety," Accor said, noting after he got hold of the baby, he wrapped it in more blankets and tucked it into his rucksack. After the baby was nestled in the bag, he placed heated hand warmers around the blankets to keep it warm.

The woman was placed on a 6 feet by 3 feet sked, known as an emergency medical extraction device. Folk said he acted as a sled dog by putting the sked's rope around his waist and pulling it to the waiting Humvee down the ridge.

"The whole time I was walking through the snow I was happy that the snowshoes didn't break," Accor said. As the Soldiers made their way back down the ridge, Folk would look in on the baby who was snuggled in the rucksack on Accor's back.

Once back at the Humvee, the Soldiers transported the mother and baby to a nearby relative's home. "They made arrangements to go to another state to be with family members," Accor said.

Sgt. 1st Class David Hoffman, a fellow member of the 201st Field Artillery Battalion who lives in Falling Waters, W.Va., praised his comrades for their successful rescue effort. "They did a really great job," Hoffman said.

"It's our job," Accor said. "That's what we are here for."

And what about the now famous snowshoes?

Both pairs are expected to be put on display in the battalion's headquarters ... after the two Soldiers are finished using them.

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## Massachusetts Air Guard: Electronic Reuse & Recycling Campaign Award winner



(From left to right) Ms. Michelle Moore, Mr. John Richardson, Ms. Jen Marsh, and Col. Edward J. Gunning (Photo courtesy of 104 MSG /CC)

MA NG, Feb 10: On Feb. 4, the 104th Fighter Wing's environmental management office at Barnes Air National Guard Base was recognized by the Office of the Federal Environmental Executive in Washington D.C. as the 2008-2009 Electronic Reuse & Recycling Campaign Award winner.

The environmental management office was recognized for successfully recycling 425 pounds of electronic waste (E-Waste) through local contracts over the previous year, demonstrating the unit's true commitment to environmental protection and safety. The office of two is staffed by Environmental Manager Mr. John Richardson and Assistant Environmental Manager Ms. Jennifer Marsh.

Ms. Michelle Moore, the Federal Environmental Executive, presented the awards to the recipients at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building in Washington D.C.

The Office of the Federal Environmental Executive is responsible for promoting sustainability and environmental stewardship throughout Federal government operations.

"I am so proud of our environmental management office," said Col. Robert Brooks, Commander of the 104th Fighter Wing. "This award demonstrates our commitment to the community and to the environment."

This is not the first national award received by the 104th Fighter Wing. The environmental management office was the recipient of the Bronze Level Award for the 2005 Federal Electronics Challenge.

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