

GAIT TO GREATNESS

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EASING THE BURDEN OF STUDENT LOAN DEBT

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Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

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Capitol prayer rejected over 'Jesus'

Saying it could offend people of other faiths, state lawmakers tell minister to remove it

By Tom Barnes

Post-Gazette Harrisburg Bureau

HARRISBURG — Three weeks ago, a Christian clergyman from Adams County was surprised and upset when state House officials wouldn't let him open a session with a prayer that contained what they termed an "offensive" word — the name of Jesus.

He planned to end his prayer with "In Jesus' name, Amen." Now the Rev. Gerry Stoltzfoos of the Freedom Valley Worship Center in Gettysburg is hoping for a different result next week, when he opens a state Senate session with a prayer.

State House officials said they didn't err when they asked the pastor to alter his invocation due to a brief, quickly repealed policy of vetting prayers.

But as word about the incident spreads in and out of the Legislature, they are hearing increasing numbers of complaints, online criticism and even threats of lawsuits, which is bogging down the already complicated process of enacting an overdue state budget.

The Rev. Stoltzfoos said he didn't really want to open the

SEE **PRAYER**, PAGE A-14

For some hospitals, they're small but mighty

By Steve Twedt

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

As West Penn Allegheny Health System and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center draw battle lines over physicians and even prepare to square off in federal court, a trio of independent regional and community hospitals operate successfully in their shadows.

They do it, they say, by emphasizing quality and convenience for patients, providing a good working environment for their staffs and keeping up with the latest technology.

They do it, too, by each offering something that makes them stand out: private rooms at Jefferson Regional Medical Center in Jefferson Hills, for one example, or the greatly expanded

SEE **HOSPITALS**, PAGE A-10

FIRST OF TWO PARTS

WOUNDED WARRIORS

WOUNDED FAMILIES



Rebecca Droke/Post-Gazette

Kevin Kammerdiener's life was altered forever when a suicide bomber in Afghanistan slammed into his Humvee, killing two soldiers and seriously injuring him and another soldier. His mother, Leslie, left, says that in many ways caring for Kevin is like caring for a child again.

A new army of mothers, spouses and other relatives has stepped up to care for seriously injured troops

By Michael A. Fuoco
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

LATE at night on the Fourth of July, Leslie Kammerdiener is stung by independence lost.

On a day celebrating the freedom America won in bloody battles 233 years ago on these shores, she mourns the independence her son, Kevin, lost 400 days earlier while defending his country in a foreign land.

The 44-year-old single mother longs for a different life that seems a lifetime ago — a life altered forever on May 31, 2008, when a suicide bomber in Afghanistan slammed into Army Pvt. Kammerdiener's Humvee, killing two soldiers and critically injuring him and another soldier. Kevin, then 19, lost the function of 85 percent

of his left brain and was burned over 23 percent of his body.

Before then, she, Kevin, and his older sister, Brianna, had lived happily in their hometown of East Brady, Clarion County. Before then, she knew nothing of the often unpronounceable surgeries, treatments, medications and therapies that have allowed her son to survive injuries so severe that doctors were surprised he lived. Before then, she never dealt with the alphabet soup of Army acronyms, military protocol and procedures.

Since his injury, Leslie has given up her job, her income, her health insurance, her hometown — in essence her life — to be by Kevin's hospital bed, first in San Antonio, Texas, and then Tampa.

SEE **CAREGIVERS**, PAGE A-12

IN TOMORROW'S POST-GAZETTE: FOR KEVIN KAMMERDIENER, A PURPLE HEART, A LONG RECOVERY

Getting over the moon

Then, beating the Soviets was a major factor. Today, is there a better purpose?

By Mark Roth
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

APOLLO 11
T+40 YEARS



FIRST OF TWO PARTS

But public enthusiasm for space missions began to wane much earlier than that.

By the time of Apollo 13, just nine months after Apollo 11's historic landing, major TV networks were no longer offering continuous coverage of the moon missions. CBS had to break into "The Doris Day Show" when a midflight accident threatened the lives of the Apollo 13 crew, a drama

SEE **MOON**, PAGE A-6

Cronkite will be forever linked to defining moments in U.S. history

By Rob Owen
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

AN APPRECIATION

Walter Cronkite was the trusted news anchor of a generation — perhaps the last to be embraced by a wide swath of Americans before the rising tide of cable news pundits helped cement America's current ideological divide.

Republican or Democrat, for almost two decades Americans

trusted Mr. Cronkite to bring them a fair rendering of the day's events — sometimes turbulent (President Kennedy's assassination), sometimes triumphant (man's first steps on the moon, 40 years ago tomorrow).

SEE **CRONKITE**, PAGE A-5



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Today's topic: UPMC Senior Communities

UPMC
UPMCminute.com

WOUNDED WARRIORS, WOUNDED FAMILIES

A new army of caregivers

CAREGIVERS, FROM PAGE A-1

Now that he is an active-duty outpatient, she's his primary caregiver virtually 24/7 at their new residence in Riverview, a suburb south of Tampa. And when Kevin finally goes to sleep, she documents his progress and setbacks, her hopes and fears, in elegant, candid prose on an Internet blog, drawing responses from across the country and Europe.

Because of improved body armor and medical care, more service members in Iraq and Afghanistan are surviving horrific injuries that would have killed them in earlier wars.

A 2008 Rand study estimated that as many as 320,000 of the approximately 1.6 million service members deployed since 2001 to Afghanistan and two years later to Iraq have suffered some form of traumatic brain injury during deployment.

As a result, a new army of mothers, spouses and other relatives have stepped up to care for the seriously wounded — many who have suffered the traumatic brain injuries caused by explosive devices that have become the "signature wound" of the current conflicts.

Like Leslie, they've quit their jobs, moved to new locales, taken on debt and ignored their own physical and mental health to put the needs of loved ones first.

Congress now is considering bills that would recognize the contributions and sacrifices of primary caregivers by providing them with benefits that may include a monthly stipend, health care and mental health counseling.

Such support would be a godsend for Leslie.

She and her 25-year-old daughter, known to family, friends and acquaintances as Breezy, have survived primarily on \$30,000 to \$40,000 donated by residents of East Brady and surrounding communities over the past year.

To show their appreciation, the family returned for a visit Thursday for the community's annual Riverfest celebration this weekend, to be capped tonight by the Army's presentation to Kevin of his Purple Heart medal.

Leslie likewise has been hailed by former neighbors, friends, doctors, nurses and social workers for her fighting spirit and dedication. She deflects such praise. She's a mother, she says. She loves her son. What choice does she have? Institutionalization? Never.

On that July 4 night, she glances at Kevin as he sleeps. No longer the fearless Army Airborne soldier, the daredevil skateboarder, the happy-go-lucky jokester he once was, he is an often affectionate, sometimes obstinate man-child needing his mother's unconditional love, devotion, support.

Her strong will returns, chasing away self-pity. Drying her tears, she focuses not on what was lost but what remains — and what's to come. Not only has her son survived, he has exceeded medical prognoses.

He's learned to speak a bit — 35 words! — and pantomimes innumerable words and phrases his brain no longer can form. Despite a weakened right leg, he has learned to walk short distances by himself. And most significantly, he has to a high degree recaptured that spark in his eyes, that sense of humor, that essence that makes him the Kevin he once was.

His road to recovery remains long — his right arm is curled and doesn't move, his right leg needs a brace, he has lost peripheral vision. But who knows where his recovery will lead, how much farther he'll progress?

Her resolve restored, she heads to bed. Tomorrow is Day 401 of his recovery — and of hers. And the day after that, a son, a brother, a warrior who no longer can say his own name will turn 21.

Where's the second dog tag? Hurry," Leslie says to Kevin earlier this month, as they gather his Army gear for the upcoming Purple Heart ceremony.

"Ahhh ... geez!" he retorts in mock frustration. It is a game the two often play.

"Don't get smart," Leslie teases back. "I'm your mother. I could deck you."

Smiling, Kevin, at 6 feet tall, reaches down to his 5-foot-2-inch mom and sweetly, if mockingly, pats her head. She helps him with the dog tags.

Using a cane, he turns to amble away.

"Wait. I just did something nice for you. What do you say?" she asks Kevin, whom she often calls "Buddy."

"What?" Kevin says, shrugging his shoulders and raising his arms, palms upward. His words come with difficulty, carried with a quick burst of air and a deep rasp as he struggles to enunciate. "OK ... OK ... I love ... you."

"I love you, too, but that's not what you say when someone does something nice for you."

Kevin thinks for a moment. "Oh ... thanks."

"Good job!" his mom says.

"God!" he says as he walks away, rolling his eyes in faux exasperation at a mother's prodding.

Leslie smiles. He's learning ... and exhibiting his joking personality to boot.

Nurturing, comforting and caring comes naturally to Leslie. The oldest of four children, she often looked after her siblings because



After a long day, Leslie walks with Kevin through their new neighborhood in Riverview, Fla.



Siblings Breezy and Kevin have always been close. After Kevin was injured she quit her job to help care for him.

her parents, Ed and Jane Juart, both worked. Her dad, an executive chef, moved the family numerous times to head institutional food operations for Stouffer's and other companies before settling in Creekside, Indiana County.

At Marion Center High School, Leslie excelled at cooking, baking and home economics and considered going to culinary school upon graduating in 1983. Instead, she married and gave birth to Breezy and Kevin.

The marriage didn't last. The couple divorced about a dozen years ago, and for most of that time the children's father had no contact with the kids. There has been intermittent contact since Kevin was wounded.

After the divorce, Leslie struggled to provide for the children. With a former boyfriend, she operated Barger's Movies and More in East Brady, a movie rental and tanning business, for about seven years. Next came an Internet scrapbooking business she sold after three years. Most recently, she worked in the billing department for Armstrong Cable, the \$35,000-a-year job she left after Kevin was injured.

Kevin, who graduated from Karns City High School in 2006, wasn't an avid student. He was more interested in the thrill of flying through the air on a skateboard than understanding



Kevin tries on a maroon beret from his unit. He was a member of the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

the physics of it. He attended Pittsburgh Technical Institute for a couple of months but quit after he broke his right ankle skateboarding — the latest in a series of accidents, including a brain injury when he was hit by a car while riding a bike at age 7. Skate-

boarding mishaps over the years also accounted for more than 150 stitches and a dislocated elbow.

So, it probably wasn't a surprise that the boy who thought nothing of jumping off his roof into a swimming pool, who loved going airborne over



Kevin leans against a Humvee during his deployment to Afghanistan.

steps on a skateboard, would join the Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade.

Still, when he told his mother of his plans, she blanched.

"I really don't want you to do this, but if you want to, I'll support you," she told him. "You know you're going to go to war, you know you're going over there."

"I know, Mom. This is what I want to do."

Two years ago today, he left for basic training. She hoped he would return alive; she feared he would return dead.

"I never thought about the middle."

Leslie found Kevin crying uncontrollably in the shower earlier this month, shortly before returning to Tampa after yet another plastic surgery at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio.

"What's wrong? What's wrong?" Sobbing, Kevin lifted his functioning left arm high above his head, and closed his hand as if grabbing something. He pointed his index finger to the sky and quickly toward the ground, like something falling. "Eeeeeee!" he said. He shook his head. And cried some more.

Leslie understood. Kevin had mimicked holding a parachute jump line in a plane and parachuting out. He loved doing that. Only now had he realized that he would never do so again, that his plans for a military career were gone forever.

On a placid day this month in Riverview's South Fork housing development, the only sounds are the soft rustle of palm fronds and workers hammering and sawing at homes under construction.

At the last home on the left at the end of Snowden Hall Place, the maroon front door opens. Leaning on his cane, Kevin, dressed as he often is in a skateboarder T-shirt, baggy shorts and sneakers, welcomes visitors to his new house with smiles and nods. With a "Whoop!" here and a "Yeah!" there, he gives a tour of the expansive, beautiful home.

For months, after Kevin fell asleep in the Veterans Affairs hospital in Tampa, Leslie and Breezy spent three or four hours nightly trying to find a home in the pricey local housing market that would be big enough for Kevin to move about easily.

Finally, they found a five-bedroom house, which they purchased for \$289,000. For the down payment, they used about \$60,000 of Kevin's \$100,000 Army insurance — the maximum amount paid for a traumatic brain injury. Leslie dreams that someday her son will raise a family there.

Kevin points to the small flat screen TV in front of his king-size bed, where he often watches "Harry Potter" movies, action flicks and comedies or listens to heavy metal music on an iPod. He motions to an autographed skateboard sent him by skateboarding legend Tony Hawk and a football autographed by members of the Pittsburgh Steelers' Super Bowl team. He seems particularly proud of a picture on his night stand in which he, Leslie and Breezy are smiling broadly.

Earlier that morning, Breezy moved back to Riverview to help with Kevin's care after living for about five months in San Antonio. There, she'd been tending to her boyfriend, a member of Kevin's unit whom she met while he, like Kevin, was a patient in an Army medical center.

Like her mother, Breezy is outgoing, sweet and kind, with an easy smile but a world-weariness that feels misplaced in someone so young. Like anyone close to a severely wounded warrior, she, too, has been wounded, as have other family members. Leslie's parents recently moved to Riverview to lend a hand with Kevin's care. Her sister and brother-in-law, Kim and Joe Piriano from Creekside, plan to soon quit their jobs to do the same.

Breezy has had some therapy but still struggles to accept the scope of her brother's injuries. Like Leslie, she feels she needs more counseling to deal with anger, stress and sorrow, but the family has no insurance to cover it.

"I have a lot of anger about it, a lot of questions, but they're always going

WOUNDED WARRIORS, WOUNDED FAMILIES



Now that Kevin can walk, Leslie builds his independence by not helping him.



Leslie is an avid scrapbooker and has documented many of the milestones of Kevin's recovery.

Caregivers of wounded veterans could get federal aid

By Michael A. Fuoco
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Momentum is growing on Capitol Hill to provide additional and consistent support to primary caregivers of seriously injured service members from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

On April 2, Sen. Daniel K. Akaka, D-Hawaii, chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee, and ranking member Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., introduced Senate Bill 801, the Family Caregiver Program Act of 2009.

The Department of Veterans Affairs "motto is to 'care for him who shall have borne the battle,'" Mr. Akaka said. "VA must recognize and support these family caregivers for what they are: partners in a shared mission."

The bill, which could come to a Senate vote soon, would provide VA training and certification to caregivers and personal care attendants; a living stipend; access to health care services, including mental health counseling; and new travel benefits.

In the House, HR 3155, the Caregiver Assistance and Resource Enhancement Act introduced by Rep. Michael Michaud, D-Maine, would provide caregivers with training support and medical care.

"Behind every wounded warrior is a wounded family," Barbara Cohoon of the National Military Family Association said in an interview.

Ralph Ibson, senior fellow for the Wounded Warrior Project, a Jacksonville, Fla.-based nonprofit advocate for injured service members, said the project views the Senate bill as comprehensive and more encompassing than the proposed House legislation.

The sacrifices of caregivers need to be supported, he said. "This is the story in the shadows that desperately needs to be told."

Helping to tell that story this summer at a House subcommittee hearing on a previous bill was Anna Frese, whose brother, retired Army Sgt. Eric Edmundson of North Carolina, was injured by a roadside bomb in Iraq on Oct. 2, 2005. He had a traumatic brain injury, shrapnel wounds to his abdomen and fractures in two vertebrae. While awaiting transport to Germany, Mr. Edmundson went into cardiac arrest. Medical workers revived him, but his brain had been deprived of oxygen.

Now 28, he struggles to walk, talk, eat and drink. His father, Edgar Edmundson, 54, his primary caregiver, quit his job as a warehouse supervisor to attend to his son. He has used up his retirement funds and savings and no longer has health insurance.

"While the decision to care for a loved one may come easily ... family caregiving can take an extraordinary toll — emotionally, physically, spiritually and economically," Ms. Frese said.

Some components of the bills already exist in the VA's programs but are inconsistently provided across the country, Mr. Ibson noted. "What this [Senate] bill does is move the VA from a piecemeal situation ... to a more systematic framework."

Mr. Ibson said current options for veterans who need long-term care range from expensive institutionalization — which costs the VA an estimated \$296,000 to \$320,000 per veteran per year — to having the VA provide services in the home through contract employees.

But, he said, many family members want to be the primary caregivers "and the family finds itself in a self-sacrificing mode, bearing an enormous challenge, multiple burdens, risk of exhaustion physically, psychologically, emotionally and economically and suffering insidiously in terms of their own physical health."

Moreover, noted Mike Turner, the Wounded Warrior Project's chief of congressional affairs, the evidence is compelling that the quality and speed of recovery is positively affected by the care of a loved one at home.

Over the next four days, more than two dozen families involved in caregiving will meet with lawmakers in Washington, D.C., to push for passage of a caregiver bill.

Michael A. Fuoco can be reached at mfuoco@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1968.

to be unanswered." She breaks down.

She has put her once-independent personal life on hold. She is searching for a job to support her and her mother while Kevin continues to receive his Army pay.

She misses Western Pennsylvania, where she left her friends, family and a \$24,000-a-year job as a clerk processing federal disability claims in the underground Iron Mountain, the former limestone-mine-turned-storage-vault near Butler.

As if on cue, as Breezy sorts laundry and discusses how she learned of her brother's wounding — "It was 2:22 p.m., I remember" — Kevin enters the garage, wearing a cowboy hat she brought back from Texas. With the hat askew on his head, he makes a funny face and shouts, "Who! Who!" His mother, sister and visitors crack up.

"You're out of control, boy," she says through her laughter. "How am I supposed to take you seriously?"

"Mom!" he says, feigning impatience — or maybe not.

"What? Am I too slow?" Leslie asks as she makes waffles for breakfast. "Yep ... Ahhhh!" he says, tapping the fingers of his left hand on the glass table top.

She brings him the waffles after cutting them because he cannot do so himself.

"We're ... not ... worthy," he jokes, bowing down as he strings together the catchphrase from the movie "Wayne's World."

Just as quickly, the mood turns. Leslie tells Kevin they have to leave soon. Recently, it's been a struggle to get him to go to his speech, occupational and physical therapies.

"Mom! No!" he says defiantly, exhibiting a trait that often emerges after severe brain injuries.

Leslie tells him he has to go and that's it. She says they'll also visit friends on the polytrauma unit where he once was a patient. He gets in the car and during the 30-minute ride dances in his seat to a heavy metal song he blasts on the radio — an unusual choice because he's often over-stimulated by loud noises.

But upon arriving at James A. Haley Veterans Hospital in Tampa, Kevin turns his wheelchair away from the building where therapy is held. Now Leslie is frustrated.

"You have to go to therapy!" she says sternly. "You have to go to therapy! That's the way it is!"

He throws down his skateboard cap. He buries his head in his hands. Finally, reluctantly, he listens to his mother.

In any other war, Kevin and others who suffered such severe battle injuries would have died. But the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have resulted in comparatively low mortality rates, the Center for Naval Analysis noted in an April report titled "Economic Impact on Caregivers of the Seriously Wounded, Ill and Injured."

The Center, a federally funded research and development organization serving defense agencies, noted



Leslie prepares breakfast, one of the many daily activities she performs for Kevin.



Leslie feels blessed that Kevin is alive and still has his personality.

that in World Wars I and II, the ratio of wounded to killed service members averaged about 1.7 wounded for every

service member who died. In Korea and Vietnam, air medical evacuation improved the injury

ON THE WEB

For a video report on the Kammerdiensers' struggles and a link to Leslie's blog, visit post-gazette.com.

survival rate to about three service members wounded for every fatality. In the two most recent conflicts the ratio has ballooned to about 7 to 1, largely due to improved body armor and battlefield medicine techniques.

In its report, the center estimated that each year another 720 seriously wounded, ill or injured service members will need a caregiver for an average of 19 months. About three of every four caregivers have quit or taken time from either work or school. Based on those figures, the center estimated that over the average 19-month period of caregiving, economic losses suffered by those tending to wounding warriors amounts to \$43.4 million.

In about half of the cases, mothers like Leslie are the primary caregiver for those not married and under 30 years old. Noneconomic impacts on caregivers, the report noted, include high levels of emotional distress, family dysfunction, anxiety and clinical depression.

"Family support is critical to patients' successful rehabilitation ..." the report states. "There is the belief that caregivers speed the recovery process of service members."

Kevin took his first drink — a sip of Pepsi — on Sept. 8, 2008. He spoke his first word — "Hi" — and ate his first food — pudding — on Sept. 12. He took his first step Nov. 2.

But it was his first visit to East Brady in May that Leslie views as the biggest step, a life-altering experience. As Leslie and Kevin rolled into town after driving north from Florida, Kevin became very excited. "Oh! Oh!" he said.

It was there that much of his memory returned — he recognized family and friends, understood when they spoke of shared experiences. For Leslie, much of Kevin returned during that trip — his personality, his spark, his self.

They drove home on May 31 — the one-year anniversary of Kevin's wounding. As Kevin slept, Leslie thought of that day and looked upon her son — scarred, without full use of his right side, brain injured. Yet, she saw hope.

Her thoughts shifted to the fates of Spc. James Finley of Missouri and Pfc. Andrew Shields of Washington, the two soldiers killed in the suicide-bomber attack that wounded her son. Her heart broke, thinking of those warriors, of what their families had lost.

"How can I possibly feel bad when I have so much more than so many other people?" she thought.

On a day that a year earlier altered life forever for her son, her family, herself, she mourned for others.

It was for them she wept.

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JULY 20, 1969: 'ONE SMALL STEP FOR MAN...'

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

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APOLLO 11 T + 40 YEARS

Official says he knew robbers

Warrant out in Stanley Lowe's kidnap, stabbing

By Karen Kane
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Former Pittsburgh Housing Authority Director Stanley A. Lowe told police he recognized two men who broke into his Manchester home, stabbed and kidnapped him, then left him for dead at an automated teller machine outside a shopping plaza in Banksville.

A warrant was issued for one of the men, Matthew Frazier, who police say has connections to Virginia. Mr. Frazier is to be charged with aggravated assault, kidnapping, robbery, burglary and access device fraud.

In an interview with police, Mr. Lowe, 59, said he recognized the two men who broke into his Sheffield Street home early Saturday, noting that he "knew them to see them." He told police he has known the suspect later identified as Mr. Frazier for approximately six months through a work program called Labor Ready, an affidavit said.

The second suspect was identified only as a black man of medium build and

SEE **LOWE**, PAGE A-8

FRANK McCOURT 1930 — 2009

An appreciation



With startling authenticity, he wrote the stuff of Irish

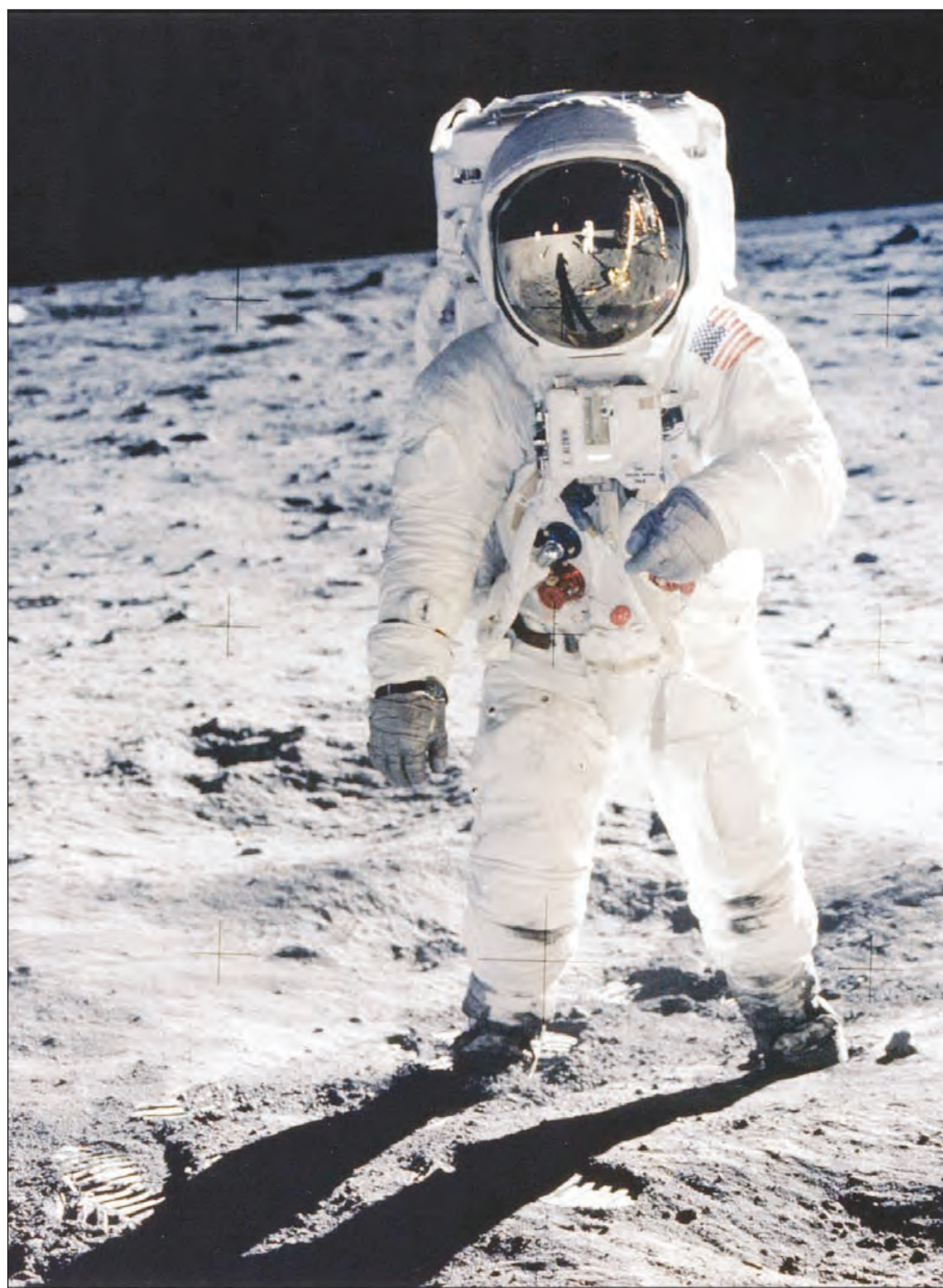
By Dennis B. Roddy
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The risk Frank McCourt took in writing "Angela's Ashes," and committing his Irishness to the written page was clear the moment the reader picked up a copy of The New Yorker in 1996 where the first installment appeared.

Not, this: The drinking father. The bullying schoolmaster. The hoary continuation of the battle over whether deValera or Collins was the truer patriot. The inevitable dead sibling was found in his cold, Limerick bed.

Yes, all of this. It worked -- the spare, childlike prose that won him The Prize, the

SEE **MCCOURT**, PAGE A-2



NASA

July 20, 1969: Edwin E. Aldrin Jr. poses for a historic picture on the moon taken by Neil Armstrong.

The countdown's on for humans to return

By David Templeton
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Plans are under way for humans to return to the moon "no later than 2020," says NASA. And if and when it happens, people may remain there forever.

As a permanent outpost for humans, the moon may become not only a destination for science and exploration, but also for economic endeavors, including mining of platinum-based metals or collection of helium-3 for fusion-energy reactors back on Earth.

In time, the moon will have its own transportation system, energy grid and housing plans powered by solar-panels with fuel centers to

provide rocket fuel for daily blasts off to Earth and Mars.

Projections wax and wane about when people will revisit the moon and what will happen when they do.

But the NASA Authorization Act of 2005 has established a program to develop a sustained human presence on the moon, with an emphasis on "exploration, science, commerce and U.S. pre-eminence in space." That program will serve "as a stepping stone to future exploration of Mars and other destinations" throughout the solar system.

NASA's Web site says work on the moon will enable eventual

SEE **MOON**, PAGE A-5

He came from the city, worked on Apollo memorials

By David Templeton
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Weeks before Apollo 11 blasted off into history, Robert Gilruth approached Jack Kinzler with a mission and a too-tight deadline.

Dr. Gilruth wanted Mr. Kinzler to figure out how best to memorialize humankind's first moon landing. With the whole world watching, how could the astronauts mark the moment and solidify its historical importance?

Dr. Gilruth, director of the Manned Spacecraft Center (later to be renamed as the Johnson Space Center) had summoned the right guy to his office that day in 1969.

SEE **PLAQUE**, PAGE A-4

TO INFINITY AND BEYOND

From cell phones to computers, technology from NASA's space program continues to touch everyday life. **Magazine, Page C-1**

ON THE WEB

To share comments on the moon landing and space program visit **post-gazette.com**

This time, it's a golfer whose dream defied age

By Paul Newberry
The Associated Press

TURNBERRY, Scotland **M**aybe when the disappointment wears off — for both Tom Watson and the millions of golf fans cheering him on — everyone will take a larger message from his amazing performance in the British Open along the Scottish coast.

Age, indeed, is just a number.

Let's not put these ol' geezers out to pasture just yet.

From George Foreman to Dara Torres, from Lance Armstrong to Mark Martin — and now, Mr. Watson — these geriatric athletes pop out of their rocking chairs from time to time, reminding us that youth may win out most times, but it's not always

■ Stewart Cink walks away from Turnberry as the champion of the 138th British Open. **Sports, Page D-1**

served. "As athletes, we're not putting an age limit on our dreams," Ms. Torres said from a hotel in Italy, where the 42-year-old swimmer who earned three silver medals in last year's Olympics is preparing to compete at the world championships. "I don't think it matters what age you are."

Mr. Watson proved that during four magical days at Turnberry, even if the ending was painful to watch. Less than a year removed from hip replacement surgery and three years away from qualifying for Social Security, he nearly won the British Open — one of golf's four majors that compose the Grand Slam — at age 59.

Fifty-nine! "He's striking the ball so well, just so straight," said Mathew Goggin, 24 years younger and Mr. Watson's playing partner yesterday. "He can contend on these links forever the way he strikes the ball."

Mr. Watson shot a 5-under 65 in the opening round. The Kansas City, Mo., native led after the next two days, the oldest golfer ever to set the pace

SEE **AGE**, PAGE A-9



Rebecca Droke/Post-Gazette

Bianna "Breezy" Kammerdiener hugs her brother, Kevin, before he was awarded the Purple Heart yesterday.

East Brady embraces its hero

By Michael A. Fuoco
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

EAST BRADY, Pa. — Nearly 14 months ago, he lay near death in a military hospital, a comatose Army soldier whose wounds from a terrorist bomber in Afghanistan were so severe that, even if he lived, doctors foresaw a life with little cognitive or physical ability.

But yesterday, Cpl. Kevin Kammerdiener, the 21-year-old Army Airborne soldier who surpassed all those prognoses, returned to his hometown dur-

WOUNDED WARRIORS WOUNDED FAMILIES Second of two parts

For a video of the Purple Heart ceremony for Kevin Kammerdiener visit **post-gazette.com**

ing its annual Riverfest festival to receive his Purple Heart medal.

Wearing a digital camouflage Army Combat Uniform for the first time since his

wounding, the only words he spoke to the crowd were "Thank you," but he did so with heart and a smile.

Just those few words — plus his walking up three steps to a stage, waving and smiling and blowing kisses to the crowd — were enough to have the throng of about 1,000 jump to their feet numerous times, applaud, cheer and even weep in the grandstands and hillside of a former football field where the ceremony was held.

There was a crescendo after

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WOUNDED WARRIORS / WOUNDED FAMILIES

A world turned upside down

In talking to relatives of these four wounded service members, Post-Gazette staff writer Michael A. Fuoco found they felt the government should provide more support for primary caregivers, especially those who gave up jobs and receive no stipend, medical insurance, mental health counseling or respite care while tending to their loved ones.



Bryan and Cheryl Gansner

Caregivers too often fail to care for themselves

Cheryl Gansner of Knoxville, Tenn., had stomach problems last year but put off seeking treatment. Her priority was her husband, Army Staff Sgt. Bryan Gansner, who suffered debilitating leg wounds when his Humvee ran over an improvised explosive device on July 28, 2006, in Kirkuk, Iraq.

When Ms. Gansner couldn't take the pain anymore, she saw a doctor only to learn she needed surgery for a severe acid reflux condition that could have been caused — and worsened — by stress.

Primary caregivers of wounded warriors far too often neglect their own health, advocates note and studies show.

"I definitely had been neglecting myself for a long time," Ms. Gansner said. "I still have health issues, too many for someone who is only 27 years old."

And it's not just physical. Ms. Gansner said in an interview and in a blog she posts that the war injuries have tested the couple's marriage. They had been married barely a year when he was injured during his second tour of duty in Iraq. He had been in the Army for 10 years.

Mr. Gansner, 31, retired from the service after a year at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and 20 months of outpatient physical and occupational therapy. His wife has

returned to work as a social worker, a job she quit while her husband recovered.

With plates and screws in both heels and ankles, Mr. Gansner has limited mobility and cannot stand in place for more than a few minutes. He works for a company that makes bomb-defusing robots, but like other people with severe brain injuries, he has difficulty remembering and is confused easily. And he has emotional scars — post-traumatic stress and depressive anxiety disorders.

"Day to day, I don't know what situation he's going to be in. Is he going to be angry that day, sad that day or happy that day?" Ms. Gansner said. "It definitely takes a toll on you. I'm not going to say there isn't resentment because there is. There is no set way to cope with all of this."

As the spouse of an Army retiree, she said she is much better off than parents of the wounded and other caregivers, who unlike her family, are not covered by the Tricare military health plan. Additional government support is needed for caregivers, recognizing the sacrifices they make financially, emotionally and physically, she said.

"Something has to happen. For those who provide full-time care, there needs to be something for them. It's absurd for them to not have something."



Rebecca Droke/Post-Gazette

Sp. Nathan Rigney helps Cpl. Kevin Kammerdiener dress before the Purple Heart ceremony at an apartment in Butler yesterday. The two have been in the same unit since they met in basic training.

East Brady embraces its hero

HEART, FROM PAGE A-1

Army Capt. Sandra Turner, the Army liaison at the James A. Haley Veteran's Hospital in Tampa, where Kevin was a patient, pinned the medal on his chest. Assisting was Sp. Nathan Rigney, 20, of Bishop, Calif., who took leave to come from his assignment in Germany to be with his friend and fellow 173rd Airborne Brigade member. He was in the convoy in May 2008 and saw what happened to his comrade.

A 21-gun salute was fired in honor of those killed in the suicide bombing that nearly killed Kevin and Sgt. Daniel Thornhill, the other soldier injured in the incident, who is now a double amputee with a spinal cord injury.

At the end of the short ceremony on a small plywood stage amid Riverfest's carnival rides and booths offering cheesesteaks and funnel cakes, Kevin walked down the steps as a crowd converged on him at his mother Leslie's invitation "as long as he can take it."

He smiled and hugged grandparents and children and those in between, and posed for pictures. His mother and his sister, Brianna, were elated he had done so well because victims of brain injuries like his often are over-stimulated by crowds and noise.

The community had provided moral and financial support for his mother, Leslie, 44, and Brianna, nicknamed Breezy, 25, during his long and difficult recovery. Both had to quit their jobs and move first to San Antonio, Texas, and now to a Tampa, suburb to be with the injured soldier. The community responded by donating between \$30,000 and \$40,000 to help them live.

Leslie, as Kevin's primary caregiver in their new Florida home, is hoping that Congress will pass bills it is considering to provide training, certification, stipend, medical coverage, mental health counseling and respite care to non-medical attendants like her who gave up jobs to care for injured service members.

But yesterday, all she was concerned about was how the day would go for her son. On the day he was injured, May 31, 2008, Kevin, a private at the time, had only been in Afghanistan for 1½ months.

He was a gunner atop a Humvee, the last in a NATO convoy that had just left the military forward operations base at Jalalabad, when a speeding car, loaded with explosives slammed it, killing two soldiers, critically injuring another and

"It's a miracle. No one ever thought he would ever wake up, let alone that he would communicate."

— Dr. Steven Scott

sending the burning private 35 feet in the air — equal to 3½ stories — over a roadside billboard. He landed on his left side, striking his unprotected head because his helmet had been blown off.

He spent just short of a year in hospitals. He can walk short distances despite a weakened right leg that needs a brace, can only speak about 35 words, wears burn pressure garments on his scarred legs and left arm, his right arm is curled and doesn't move, and he has lost his peripheral vision. But the physical and cognitive improvements he has made and the return of his likeable, joking personality have amazed doctors and elated Leslie and Breezy.

Earlier this month in Tampa, Dr. Steven Scott, director of polytrauma at the veterans hospital where Kevin was a patient from September until May, said his recovery has astounded him and other medical personnel.

"It's not typical progress," he said. "It's a miracle. No one ever thought he would ever wake up, let alone that he would communicate. When he came here, he was staring into space. He went from nothing to something, to where he's now interacting with his environment."

He said Kevin's motivation, like that of other service members who volunteered for duty, is key to recovery.

"His motivation to be independent, the ability to go the extra mile, that's what we see a lot in this generation. It makes you tremendously proud of the spirit, the drive, the motivation — these are America's best."

In Kevin's case, he said, Leslie "had a tremendous effect. She was there morning, noon and night, especially when he was completely disabled."

"As good a staff as you have you can never be perfect all the time. With a mother there who looks out for everything being perfect, she can level the field and

can really improve the amount of care he receives consistently around the clock."

Kevin has become an inspiration to staff and the parents of other wounded warriors at the hospital. On July 7, he visited his former ward and proudly walked for nurses and the parents whose children still have not come around from their traumatic brain and other injuries from explosives.

In past wars, Kevin and other service members never would have survived their injuries, the doctor said, but improvements in body armor, battlefield medical treatment, antibiotics, speedy transportation to hospital, and improvements in multi-trauma care have kept alive those who otherwise would have died.

"The machinery to destroy people and win wars is getting more destructive every day. No longer do they use bullets, they blow people up with stronger and stronger weaponry."

"The mechanism itself—the pressure wave, the fragments being thrown, the burns. They come back with multiple trauma type injuries, are moved 8,000 miles, halfway around the world, with the most catastrophic injuries, and they're kept alive. It's a remarkable story."

"No one ever would have envisioned this, yet this is where health care is going, where wartime injuries are going."

He said the goal is "to give back to those who fought for our freedom — freedom to talk when they can't talk, the freedom to walk when they can't walk, the freedom to think when they can't think, the freedom to see when they can't see."

"We are honored and privileged to treat them. We're treating them but we're also treating the spirit of our country and what they represent."

In the months to come, Kevin will undergo more neurological and plastic surgeries but after that his routine will primarily be therapies to improve his speech and mobility.

Last night, as her son continued to hug well wishers, Leslie said the event had been bittersweet.

"Obviously, we're elated he handled it so well. I'm proud of him. I just wish it wasn't due to this."

Nearby, Breezy agreed: "It was for a sad reason but it was a good thing. It was good that all of these people came out. It made him so happy."

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U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Tim Maxwell and wife Shannon

Injured Marine helps other wounded soldiers

U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Tim Maxwell came to Pittsburgh in October 2006 to receive the President's Award from the Veterans Leadership Program of Western Pennsylvania. He was honored for establishing the wounded warrior barracks at Camp Lejeune, N.C., where injured Marines can recover together at the first-of-its-kind facility now named for him.

At the time, Mr. Maxwell was recovering from an Oct. 24, 2004, mortar attack at Camp Kalsu, a base in Iraq. Two pieces of shrapnel sliced into his brain, requiring several surgeries and years of rehab. He had to relearn how to walk and use the right side of his body. He lost his peripheral vision and his short-term memory was affected.

But after making steady progress, significant physical and neurological declines began in 2007. Doctors discovered that shrapnel remained in his brain, exposing him to heavy metal toxins. A year ago last Thursday, doctors removed the shrapnel. His rehab began anew.

Mr. Maxwell, 44, of Dumfries, Va., retired June 30 after 21 years of service, including tours of duty in the first Gulf War, Afghanistan and Iraq. For the most part, he is self-sufficient but has minimal use of his right hand and has difficulty moving his right leg.

Because of the cognitive

loss, he gets overstimulated easily and has difficulty in large gatherings, movie theaters or restaurants, said his wife, Shannon, with whom he has three children, ages 14, 11 and 6.

"As a spouse, there's a huge array of emotions," said Ms. Maxwell, 40. "You grieve for the loss of the person you once knew because traumatic brain injury, either minimal or on a grand scale, affects personality. It affects your hopes and dreams you once had."

They had always budgeted to live on his Marine Corps salary, so the necessity of quitting her marketing job to care for her husband didn't cause major financial hardship. But that's not the case for far too many caregivers of wounded warriors, particularly parents, she said.

The Maxwells have committed themselves to helping other wounded soldiers and their families. Mr. Maxwell has a support Web site, www.sempermax.com. And in 2006, Ms. Maxwell co-founded Help for the Warriors, a nonprofit organization that supports service members and families affected by line-of-duty deaths or injuries.

At the same time, they have recommitted to each other, renewing their marriage vows following Lt. Col. Maxwell's retirement ceremony, one month before their 20th wedding anniversary.



Vincent Mannion-Brodeur

Bomb turned family's lives upside down

Jeff Brodeur and his 23-year-old daughter, Colleen Mannion-Brodeur, sport the same tattoos, reading "March 11, 2007," on their backs.

The tattoos are their way of honoring the sacrifices of Vincent Mannion-Brodeur, their son and brother, respectively. On that date, a building rigged with explosives by insurgents blew up in Tikrit, Iraq, gravely injuring then-Army Pvt. Mannion-Brodeur, in the country for only a month, and killing his sergeant.

He received a traumatic brain injury requiring the removal of his cranium and part of his frontal lobe. Shrapnel tore through his entire upper torso and his left arm was nearly blown off.

After years of operations, procedures, lengthy hospital stays — including a month as Kevin Kammerdiener's roommate in the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital in Tampa, Fla. — and therapies, Mr. Mannion-Brodeur is back home in Boston, Mass. His daily needs are tended to by his father, 45, and his mother, Maura, 49. That includes everything from dressing him and cutting his food to helping in the bathroom.

Mr. Mannion-Brodeur, who retired as a corporal, now has the speech ability of a fifth-grader.

"Our lives are totally and dramatically different now. We are baby-sitting our adult son now," said his father, who himself was medically discharged from the Army after being injured in Korea. "It has put me \$20,000 in debt. I have stomach problems and also got an infection in my mouth that I didn't get treated for quite a while."

"I had to put my son's needs before my own," Mr. Brodeur said. "My wife needs to take medication to sleep. I don't sleep. None of us sleep. We have pain, stress, we're tired all of the time, our bodies are worn out."

Mr. Brodeur said it is long past time that Congress recognizes the needs of caregivers. "Society moves on, but our lives are completely at a standstill. It affects you until the day you die," he said. "Trust me, unless you walk in our shoes, you wouldn't believe it."



Sgt. Corey Brist with wife Jenny

He's still the heart of the family

An emergency medical technician in civilian life, Sgt. Corey Brist, an Army MP, didn't hesitate when a roadside bomb exploded Dec. 4, 2005, injuring soldiers in his convoy in Baghdad, Iraq. As he rushed to the injured, a second bomb exploded.

His wife, Jenny, was told to make funeral arrangements because Mr. Brist, who suffered a traumatic brain injury, likely wouldn't survive.

Against all odds, he lived, like so many others injured in these wars. But he is forever changed. Mr. Brist, who retired in April, is blind and has problems with short-term memory and balance.

For Ms. Brist, 27, and the couple's children, Kylie, 7, and

Connor, 4, all that matters is he is alive and lives with them in Yankton, S.D.

Part of his skull was replaced with an acrylic plate. He endured 18 months of rehab in Minnesota and California, requiring the family to move to those locales. But Mr. Brist, 28, is at heart the husband and father his family remembers.

"The best thing is he is still himself, he still has his sense of humor," Ms. Brist said. "The first words he said when he began to speak was our daughter's name."

"The joy we see when he interacts with the kids, knowing he's still here and doing the same things with us is what's important. The best thing of all is he said he's going to walk his little girl down the aisle when she gets married. That makes everyone smile."

It hasn't been easy. Ms. Brist had to quit her job as a special education teacher, "but I knew my husband needed me," she said.

This month, she will attend a caregiver summit in Washington, D.C., to promote legislation to support primary caregivers.

"Right now, this is our new normal," she said. "I don't think the public knows how much work it is day to day for loved ones. It was my husband's wish to never be in a VA or a nursing home. I wouldn't have done it any other way. He's still dad, he's still my husband and we want him here."