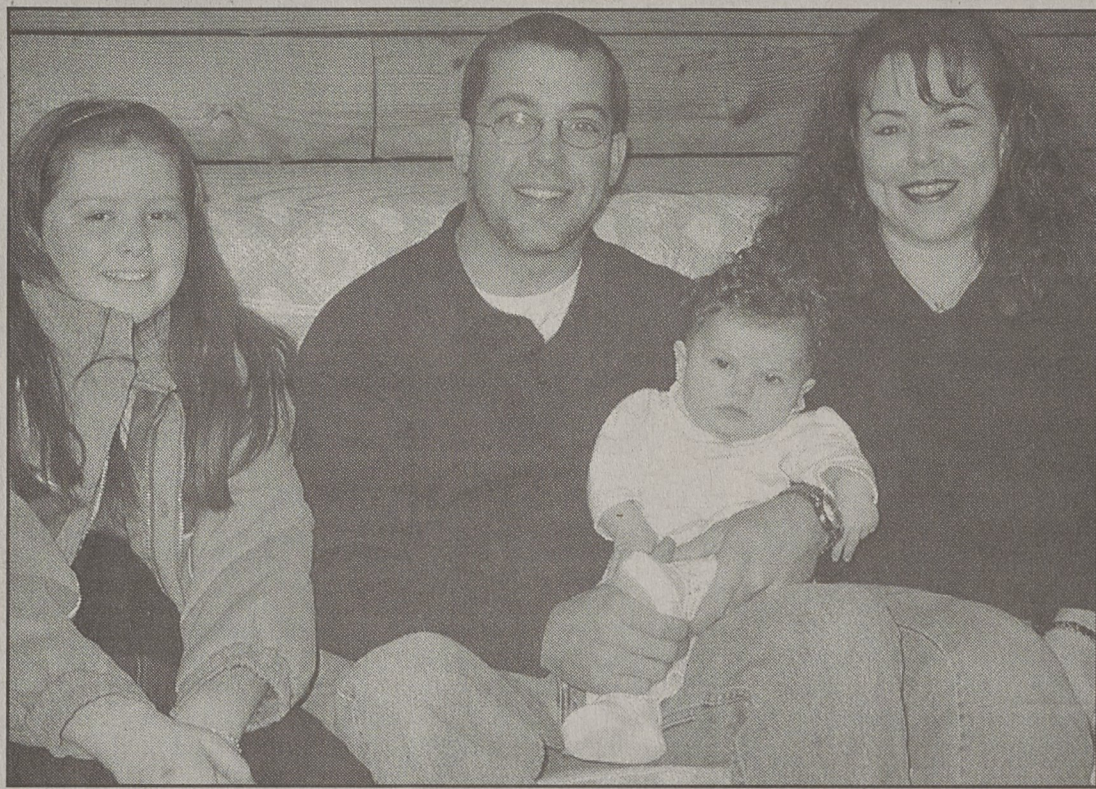


PEOPLE



Grant Holder, middle, holds daughter Anna. To his left is step-daughter Kelsie Davis and to his right is wife Angie Holder.

Grant Holder home after serving in Iraq

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

North Carolina National Guard Sgt. Grant Holder's family got a late Christmas present when he returned home December 29.

A member of a Laurinburg combat engineering company, Holder built structures including chow halls, recreation and detainee buildings. He also helped with 30 convoy escorts. This job is second only to explosive disposal in danger.

"You don't know when it's (attack) coming, where it's coming from," Holder said.

While the work was dangerous it did have one plus, meeting new and interesting people, Holder said. He met other soldiers and Iraqis.

Holder describes the majority of the people of Iraq as genuinely nice and friendly.

Holder is now readjusting to life at home. Driving, watching television, choosing his own food and civilian work are some of the activities he's getting used to.

The biggest change is a new addition to the family. Daughter Anna was born in September. Holder did get to come home for two weeks when she was born.

Holder is grateful to his wife for her support while he was away, sending him numerous care packages.

"I really appreciate my wife," Holder said.

Holder served five years in the Navy including Somalia and the first Gulf War.

Other Kings Mountain soldiers coming home include S/Sgt. Stephen Bengie, Sgt. Shane Cooper, Cpl. Joe Pearson and Spc. Brent Turner.

THOMASSON

From 1A

I'm doing," he said.

Thomasson has served as president of both the Jaycees and Lions clubs. He ran as a Democrat in the late 1950s for the General Assembly.

He and his wife Marion

enjoy traveling and have visited London several times. They have timed the trips to see the city's famed Christmas decorations.

They have a daughter Ann Parker and two grandchildren. Their daughter teaches English at a Georgia college.

Fairview Lodge meeting Saturday

Fairview Masonic Lodge #339, A.F. & A.M., Kings Mountain, will hold an emergent communication Saturday, Jan. 29 at 7 a.m. at the Masonic Lodge.

Breakfast will be served by John Eddie Bridges at 8:30.

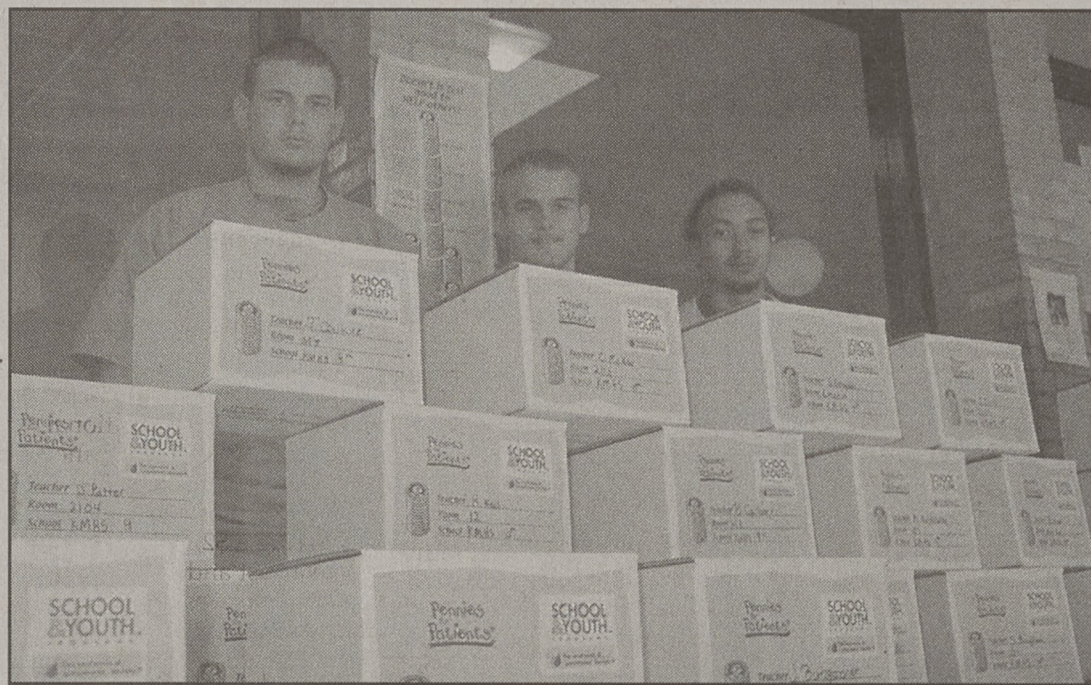
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Dustan Hudson, left, Ryan Martin and Monzell Ward help raise funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Hudson's sister Megan Bledsoe is in remission from lymphoma.

Hudson spearheading leukemia fund drive

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

Dustan Hudson is spearheading a drive to raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The project is more than a good deed for Hudson, a Kings Mountain High School senior. The disease hits home. His sister Megan Bledsoe is in remission from Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Bledsoe is a freshman at KMHS. When chemotherapy caused her hair to fall out, some students teased her. Hudson incorporated education into his project to help his sister's classmates understand what is happening.

Hudson and friends Ryan Martin and Monzell Ward are setting up small card-

board boxes - one for each homeroom - outside the cafeteria each day. They are encouraging students to donate change into their homeroom boxes. The top donating room, provided it reaches \$350, wins a pizza party. If each student donates \$1, the school will raise approximately \$1,200. The fund raiser ends Friday.

A large display with pictures of Bledsoe sits alongside the boxes. One photo includes two Carolina Panther football players visiting with her. Another portion of the display explains lymphoma.

Teacher Sharon Jackson helped Hudson set up the display.

For more information on Bledsoe, visit 3caringbridge.org/nc/megan. Her parents are Gene and Tracy Bledsoe.

King attends inauguration

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

A Kings Mountain man who served as a delegate to the Republican National Convention went to Washington last week to watch his candidate be sworn in as president.

Wayne King, one of the youngest convention delegates, traveled to the capital for two days of festivities. King attended the Black Tie and Boots Ball organized by Texas Republicans and the Democracy Ball organized by Republicans from North Carolina, California, Tennessee, Utah, South Dakota and Kentucky.

The Black Tie and Boots gala took up three floors. Party-goers could have photographs made with a bull, sample Texas foods like tacos and brisket and dance to the music of entertainers including Clay Walker and Neal McCoy.

King also attended a breakfast sponsored by Congresswoman Sue Myrick.

The big event though was the inauguration and parade. King saw people from across the United States including a high school band from Wilson, North Carolina.

Standing near King along the parade route were police officers from Minnesota and Fort Worth. He also saw Charlotte-
See King, 3A

Hammond heads surgical services

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

On March 1 Jama Hammond will celebrate her first anniversary as director of surgical services at Kings Mountain Hospital. A few more months after that, Hammond and her staff will move into the hospital's new surgical department.

"I'm excited about the fact we'll be growing," Hammond said.

She anticipates the new wing will mean more physi-

cians and surgeons opting to practice at Kings Mountain.

Hammond has worked in and around operating rooms for 30 years. She began her career in Florida as a surgery technician. After two years Hammond returned to school to earn a nursing degree. She continued to



work in the operating room on the weekends for the remainder of nursing school. Ten years ago she took her first management job at Carolinas Medical Center Pineville, then known as Mercy South.

"I still really enjoy the operating room," Hammond said.

She is fascinated by the constantly changing technology and procedures like laparoscopic surgery, endoscopic diagnostics and realistic implants. Hammond

has worked as a nurse during neuro and open heart surgery. When pressed for a favorite type of surgery, Hammond names vascular-vein and artery.

Cataract surgery is the only operation to have made Hammond squeamish. Early in her career she was standing in the back of an operating room observing the procedure when a nurse asked her to come closer. Hammond declined.

See Hammond, 3A

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