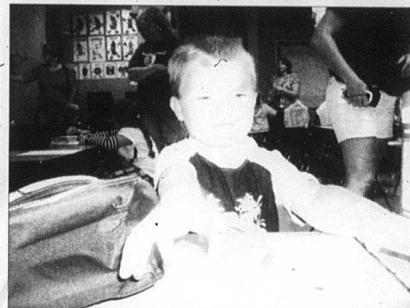


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# Nicholas County Schools back in session



Left, Nicholas County Schools students exited their respective buses entering Nicholas County Elementary and Middle School on the first day of the 2008-2009 school year Tuesday. Right Kindergarten student Trevor Scott reads himself for his first day as a Nicholas County student.

Photos by Melissa Mitchell

**Aug  
13  
2008**

# Freedom Salute honors local Guard Unit



**By Charles Mattox  
News Editor  
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A Freedom Salute was held Sunday morning to welcome the Carlisle National Guard Unit, Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery Unit, back to its home station.

Nearly 180 soldiers were honored for their service to the nation during a ceremony at the Nicholas County High School's Football Field during the Freedom Salute.

Members of two families were also honored for the supreme sacrifice of their loved one during the unit's deployment.

Staff Sgt. Delmar White, 37, of Lexington, and Private First Class Sammie E. Phillips, 19, of Vine Grove, were killed in two separate instances inside Iraq during the first week of September last year.

White was killed instantly September 2nd when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle while on a convoy security mission near Baghdad.

Phillips was killed Sept. 10 when an Iraqi vehicle swerved at the vehicle he was in, causing the vehicle to take evasive action, during which Phillips was killed as a result of the vehicle rolling over.

Both soldiers were married.

Michelle White, widow of Staff Sgt. White, attended the Freedom Salute as did Mark and Maureen Wilcox, the parents of Phillip's young widow, Ashley Marie Phillips.

Michelle White chose not to speak, but appeared comforted by the many hugs and expressions of condolences extended to her by the members of the unit and others present.

Maureen Wilcox spoke of her son-in-law's devotion to his family and unit. He had called home ten minutes before leaving on his last mission.

"He loved you guys a lot," Mrs. Wilcox said. "It gives us closure to see the soldiers that Sammie was serving with."

According to Nicholas County soldiers that served with White and Phillips, both soldiers were extremely popular and professional.

Sergeant First Class Rodney Mitchell worked closely with White in the months and weeks leading up to his fatal mission.

"Delmar had an outgoing personality and he would do anything to help any of the younger soldiers," Mitchell told The Mercury Friday. "He was very easy to get along with and he loved

See HONORED Page 10

Mark and Maureen Wilcox, father and mother-in-law of the late Pfc. Sammie Phillips, spoke with members of Sammie's platoon following the Freedom Salute Sunday.

Photo by Charles Mattox

# Davis honored at Freedom Salute

**By Charles Mattox  
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Harold Davis, 1st Sgt. of the Carlisle National Guard Unit, Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery, was honored during the Freedom Salute held Sunday at the Nicholas County High School's Football Field.

1st Sgt. Davis, 66, the son of Vernon and Jewell Husell of Nicholas County was awarded a Meritorious Service Medal for his professional and courageous service while deployed to Iraq.

Davis, the highest non-commissioned rank among the soldiers of Battery B, is married and has four children.

His military service has spanned nearly four decades since his enlistment in 1972.

He has been deployed twice, with his first deployment coming during Operation Desert Storm.

He spoke candidly to The Mercury on Friday about his recent deployment to Iraq.

"I'm pretty straight forward from the top down," he said of his personality and leadership style. "I liked knowing I had good people working for me."

Davis shared an enormous responsibility with Captain Steve Mattingly, the company commander of B Battery.

"We oversee the day-to-day operations and were responsible for all of the equipment and the welfare of our soldiers," Davis said of his and his commander's specific mission.

He also spoke of the seriousness of the unit's mission while inside Iraq.

"It's a war," he said. "Make no mistake about it. There was no real safe place there. I was scared every day of the week. Anyone who wasn't was a fool. The soldiers put their lives on the line every single day and night."

Davis also spoke of the positive impact the soldiers of B Battery had on Iraq.

"I think our soldiers had the most dangerous job there," he said. "We led more convoy security missions."

See DAVIS Page 12



Jack knifed

A Family Dollar driver on his first trip through Nicholas County had some bad directions. His decision left his truck jackknifed on Locust Grove Road. Local farmers, Sheriff Dick Garrett and deputy Bennie Buckler righted the truck and help the driver get back to US 66.

Photo by Hank Boyd

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