

# Keyser troops off to subdue Hussein

By STEVE CAMPBELL  
Staff Writer

Members of Battery C of the 201st Field Artillery, West Virginia Army National Guard, left Keyser for Fort Campbell, Ky., in the wee hours this morning.

Scores of area residents braved the cold and dark to line West Piedmont and Mineral streets early today to say goodbye as the bus loads of troops and trucks filled with gear left town under Keyser police and fire department escort.

While tears were shed at yesterday's appreciation ceremony held in the parking lot of the Kelley National Guard Armory, this morning a quiet and stoic calm met the troops.

Family members and friends looked on as the 70 or so members of Battery C assembled before 5 a.m. in uniform with duffle bags and back packs, and loaded their gear onto green and brown camouflaged trucks.

There were plenty of donuts and coffee, as well as hugs and handshakes, in the armory gym this morning.

Grandparents held grandchildren, while moms and dads shared one long embrace.

Dads offered long, firm handshakes to sons leaving with the company. Departing fathers held children, some too small or too sleepy to remember the early morning goodbye.

A little girl with brown hair and bundled in a pink jacket hung onto a uniformed dad's neck her arms tightly around his broad shoulders and her legs wrapped around his waist.

Another man held an infant son tight against his chest.

Few talked in quiet tones. Most were silent. But, there were no tears.

Young men offered friends a pat on the back. Some relieved the awkward feeling with jokes and quiet laughter.

All said "take care."

Outside of the armory a long pile of duffle bags waited loading.

Police cars and fire trucks waited to provide an escort through town. Lights flashed in the cold, cold early morning air.

Down at the corner of West Piedmont and Mineral streets and over at the base of the bridge, a quiet crowd of over a hundred people shivered and waited for signs of the caravan.

Each set of headlights coming up West Piedmont brought expectation until finally the blue flashing lights of a Keyser patrol car indicated the time had arrived. The company departed in two groups, first the trucks and then the buses.

Gloved hands offered muffled applause and cheer went up as the faces of the Guardsmen pressed against bus windows to look out as they passed.

The Keyser High Key Club carried signs and a pair of veterans stood guard with the United States flag at the base of Memorial Bridge.

After the processional, the crowd left for home.

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