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DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY

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Eight-year-old friend of military commended by State Legislature

NASHVILLE – Hannah Lawson, of Lenoir City, was honored March 19 by members of the State Legislature for her courage, prayers, and selfless service to members of the military and to the children of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kosovo.

The House and Senate unanimously passed a resolution recognizing the eight-year-old for her "patriotism and compassion for military service men and women with the Creation of 'Army Angels'," and for her "amazing personal strength and courage in her fight with cancer."

In 2008, Hannah was diagnosed with a Stage 3 malignant brain tumor. After successful surgery removing the tumor, she felt she had much to be thankful for and wanted "to give something back." She began praying for deployed soldiers and met and e-mailed many of them. She also began keeping a list of their names in order to pray for each soldier separately every night before going to bed.

Eventually her list became so large that Hannah called these soldiers her "Army Angels."

Those who wrote her asked what they could do to help in her fight against cancer. But Hannah, concerned only for their safety, asked instead, "What can I do to help *you*?"

She decided to expand Army Angels to include sending soldiers care packages filled with toys and supplies to give to local children.

One group Hannah kept in her prayers was the Tennessee Army National Guard's Det. 1, Co. C, 2-104 Aviation Company nicknamed, "Southern Comfort," when they were deployed to Kosovo last year.

When Chief Warrant Officer 4 David Creech and Staff Sgt. Brian Colberson, of the Tennessee National Guard, heard of Hannah's story, they adopted her as a pen-pal. "Hannah was a real inspiration to us all," Creech said.

They corresponded with her regularly and Creech bought her a teddy bear in Kosovo he named "So-Co," short for "Southern Comfort," and began sending her photos of the bear traveling with them on missions throughout Kosovo. Hannah also sent the unit one of her first care-package shipments for the children living there.

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Hannah 2-2-2

Hannah's Army Angels project has grown so large it now raises money for the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation and provides assistance to numerous local groups. She even designed T-shirts to help raise funds.

Hannah was humble during the reading of her resolution in the Tennessee Senate Chambers. When asked if she had anything to say, all she could answer was, "Thank you!"

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CUTLINES: Hannah Lawson and parents Greg and Tracy are pictured following the ceremony in the Tennessee Senate Chambers.

All Tennessee Army and Air National Guard press releases can be found at
<http://www.tnmilitary.org/PressReleases.htm>