

Children receive gifts in annual Toys from Cops event in Sullivan

REGION » B1



N Dakota State ends ETSU's season with 27-3 victory

SPORTS » C1

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Tornadoes kill dozens in 5 states

Kentucky twister may rival longest on record

BY BRUCE SCHREINER and JIM SALTER
Associated Press

MAYFIELD, Ky. — A monstrous tornado, carving a track that could rival the longest on record, ripped across the middle of the U.S. in a stormfront that killed dozens and tore apart a candle factory, crushed a nursing home, derailed a train and smashed an Amazon warehouse.

INSIDE
» Photos of storm damage. A4, A7
» How to help. A4

"I pray that there will be another rescue. I pray that there will be another one or two," Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear said, as crews sifted through the wreckage of the candle factory in Mayfield, where 110 people were working overnight Friday when the storm hit. Forty of them were rescued.

"We had to, at times, crawl over casualties to get to live victims," said Jeremy Creason, the city's fire chief and EMS director.

In Kentucky alone, 22 were confirmed dead by Saturday afternoon, including 11 in and around Bowling Green. But Beshear said upwards of 70 may have been killed when a twister touched down for more than 200 miles in his state and that

See **TORNADOES**, Page A4

COVID-19

PANDEMIC

LOCATION	#CASES	#DEATHS
Worldwide	269,693,200+	5,301,100+
United States	49,884,500+	797,100+
Virginia	994,069	14,895
Tennessee	1,336,078	17,729

% FULLY VACCINATED IN VA.: 66.2%
% FULLY VACCINATED IN TENN.: 50.3%
SOURCES: Johns Hopkins, Virginia and Tennessee Departments of Health, AP

Thank you, **Linda Williams**, for subscribing to the Bristol Herald Courier.

45/24

Weather » A12



44TH ANNIVERSARY OF CRASH



This was the scene near Evansville's Dress Regional Airport on Dec. 14, 1977, following the crash of a chartered DC-3 airliner in which 29 people perished. The entire University of Evansville basketball team was among the victims. Marion native Stafford Stephenson was on a recruiting trip.

TWIST OF FATE

Recruiting trip led to SW Va. native missing team's fatal 1977 crash

BY TIM HAYES
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

As the midnight hour passed on that winter day in 1977 and Tuesday, Dec. 13 morphed into Wednesday, Dec. 14, Stafford Stephenson finally plopped onto his bed at a hotel not far from the airport in Tampa, Florida, and prepared to catch some much-needed shut-eye.

The 30-year-old was in his first season as an assistant basketball coach at the University of Evansville and was on a recruiting mission, one of many he embarked on in the eight months since being hired by his friend and mentor, Bobby Watson.

The Purple Aces had made the transition from the NCAA's College Division (what is now referred to as Division II) to the Division I level and the team needed some major talent to fill the roster if they were to compete with the giants of the sport.

That is why Stephenson, along with fellow assistants Mark Sandy and Bernie Simpson, had been dispatched by their boss to scope out some high school standouts across the country on the same day Evansville's team was making the trip for a game against Middle Tennessee State University.



Stafford Stephenson, assistant coach of the 1977 Aces basketball team, hugs Angela Sartore, before the unveiling of the new memorial that honored the victims of the 1977 plane crash at the Ford Center in Evansville, Indiana, in 2014.

A Smyth County, Virginia, native, Stephenson was a serious student of the sport he loved with an unbridled passion and had carefully learned the nuances of the game.

He had been a top scorer for the Scarlet Hurricanes of

Marion High School, a reliable point guard at Emory & Henry College and his burgeoning coaching career had included a two-year stint as the man calling the shots for the John Battle High School Trojans.

The enthusiastic guy from

Southwest Virginia with a receding hairline was living his hoop dreams at a school in southwestern Indiana and was willing to help Watson build a star-studded roster.

See **FATE**, Page A6

INSIDE: CLASSIFIED E1-10 | COMICS INSERT | DEATHS B2-3 | OPINION A10 | SCOREBOARD C2 | TELEVISION B6

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Fate

From Page A1

So, Stephenson settled into the bleachers on that mid-December day at a gym in Florida and closely watched a player whose name escapes him all these years later.

"The kid was a good player, not a great player, but for us it might be somebody we could recruit and have them get better," Stephenson said. "We didn't need to give up on him."

He sat beside this kid's parents during the game and hung around for a while following the contest chatting with the youngster's coach. Feeling famished after a busy day that began with a flight from Evansville's Dress Memorial Airport that morning, Stephenson stopped at McDonald's for a late supper.

By the time he got back to his room and turned on the television, the local newscast had ended and Stephenson scarfed down his fast-food meal as he watched "The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson" with Joan Embery of the San Diego Zoo showing off some exotic animals, Kelly Monteith cracking some jokes, Doug Henning performing some magic tricks and Tony Bennett belting out some tunes.

Stephenson soon dozed off as a busy day of observing more prospects in the Sunshine State awaited.

"Whipped, beat, tired," Stephenson said of that night. "I had to get some sleep so I could be fresh in the morning."

These were the days before phones were smart, cable TV news aired 24/7 and all the information you could need was at one's fingertips, so Stephenson had no idea what had happened back in Evansville.

At 7:22 p.m., Air Indiana Flight 216 had crashed just after takeoff and all 29 people aboard the Douglas DC-3 were killed. That was the plane carrying the Evansville Purple Aces to the airport in Nashville, Tennessee, for the next night's game against Middle Tennessee State.

An overloaded baggage compartment and the fact the pilot had not removed a couple of gust locks prior to liftoff were cited by the National Transportation Safety Board as the causes of the tragic events.

While Stephenson slept soundly that evening in Florida, he soon woke up to a nightmare.

'This is my team'

It was a ritual for Stafford Stephenson on those recruiting trips.

He'd venture to the lobby the first thing in the morning to grab a newspaper or two (he was a vociferous reader) and a cup of coffee.

When he got back in the room that day in Florida and laid the newspaper down (more than likely the Tampa Tribune or St. Petersburg Times), the large, bold headlines declaring a basketball team had died in a plane crash caught his eye.

"I said, 'Wow, that is awful' and I started looking and the first thing that hit me was the dateline said Evansville, Indiana," Stephenson said. "I was thinking, 'What team would be flying into Evansville?' Then I started seeing the names. It's hard to explain; it was hard to believe. I couldn't accept those names were in the paper. All of a sudden, it just kind of hit me that this is my team. This is who I am looking at."

He frantically reached for the phone and placed a call to his wife, Tess, back in Evansville.

She had been up to the wee hours of the morning calling hotels near the Tampa airport to reach her husband with no luck. The place he was staying had mistakenly told her a Stafford Stephenson was not registered.

"Tess asked me if I was OK and told me that I needed to call Jim Byers, the athletic director, immediately," Stephenson said. "I talked to him and told him I was coming back to campus right away. I threw all my clothes in a suitcase, checked with Eastern Airlines, and told them who I was, and they bent over back-



EVANSVILLE COURIER & PRESS ARCHIVES

The 1977 University of Evansville men's basketball team. Stafford Stephenson, assistant coach of the team, is seated second from the left.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Stafford Stephenson (standing at right), assistant coach of the 1977 Evansville Aces basketball team, with members of the Evansville team during their last game against Indiana State in Terre Haute, Indiana, on Dec. 10, 1977.

Coaching Career

The following is a look at where Marion, Virginia, native and Emory & Henry College graduate Stafford Stephenson coached basketball over the course of his career:

- » 1969-1971 – Pulaski High School (Pulaski, Virginia), assistant coach
- » 1971-1973 – John Battle High School, (Bristol, Virginia), head coach
- » 1973-1975 – Wake Forest University (Winston-Salem, North Carolina), assistant coach
- » 1975-1977 – Wingate Junior College (Wingate, North Carolina), head coach
- » 1977-1981 – University of Evansville (Evansville, Indiana), assistant coach
- » 1981-1985 – Southern Illinois University (Carbondale, Illinois), assistant coach

“I want to have those kids still be remembered because they were special. I know that’s easy to say, but they were a unique caliber of kids. Any time an opportunity comes up or people ask me about it, I want them to know what kind of players they were, but more importantly, what kind of people they were. You wonder what they would be doing today. They would have happy lives, I would think.”

– Stafford Stephenson, on the former Evansville players killed in plane crash

wards for me and even held the airplane for a few minutes so I could get through the check-in process. I got back to Evansville about 3 p.m. ... It was a dreary, dark, rainy, miserable day and that kind of started the next chapter."

Stephenson attended Watson's funeral service in Pittsburgh.

He traveled to Tell City, Indiana; Indianapolis, Indiana; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Goldsboro, North Carolina for the burials of some of the players on the squad.

Thirteen players, one coach, various athletic department employees and members of the flight crew were gone. The remainder of the season was canceled.

David Furr, a walk-on, had not made the trip due to an ankle injury. He died two weeks later in a car crash.

Stafford and Tess Stephenson tried to make the holidays enjoyable for their daughter, Megan, who was a toddler at the time amid the melancholy feelings.

"Starting with that Dec. 13 date, it was almost like there was a pall over the city," Ste-

phenson said. "That feeling when I got off the plane with it being dreary, cold, rainy. ... It was almost like those above us knew what we were going through and said, 'Get used to it, that's the way it is going to be for a while.'"

Losing one co-worker or pupil is heartbreaking.

How did Stephenson deal with the loss of so many that he held dear?

"I don't know really how to answer that," Stephenson said. "I was probably just in shock. I don't know any other way to describe it."

Losing battle

Stafford Stephenson has always approached things in a positive way, a glass half-full type of guy and that helped him make it through the tough times.

He played for respected coach Charlie Harkins at Marion and the Scarlet Hurricanes went 17-3 his senior year, winning the 1965 Southwest District regular-season title with him leading the way.

At Emory & Henry College, he was a cerebral 6-foot-1 point guard.

"Stafford was a very fundamental player and did everything well," said Pat Burns, a teammate of Stephenson's at E&H. "He didn't have a weakness. He handled it well, passed it well, shot it well. Everything nice you could say about a point guard, you could say about Stafford."

It was at E&H that Stephenson realized he wanted to coach the game as he learned a great deal from Tony Mandeville and Jimmy Hughes, his earliest mentors.

After two seasons coaching the junior varsity squad at Pulaski High School in Virginia, Stephenson was hired in 1971 to teach physical education, take over the hoops program and serve as an assistant baseball coach at John Battle High School in Bristol.

"When I got the job [previous coach] Jimmy Geiger told me it was a rough one," Stephenson said. "He said there was kind of a downswing in talent. We had some really good kids that were better baseball and football players than they were basketball players."

Stephenson went 2-18 that first season with both wins over the Holston Cavaliers.

"After the season, Dave Sparks [of the Bristol Herald Courier] interviewed me about the season, and in that interview I made the statement that we won't go 2-18 again," Stephenson said. "Well, we went 1-19 the next year. I kind of learned to be careful what you say."

Yet, Stephenson never got down on his squad.

"Coach Stephenson did not dwell on the negatives," said Mark Draper, who played on John Battle's 1972-73 team.

All three of Stephenson's wins against his 37 losses during his two seasons on the Battle bench ended up coming over Holston and newspaper accounts frequently used the terms hapless and lowly in regard to the squad. His final game at the helm of the Trojans was a 57-47 loss to Tazewell in the first round of the 1973 Southwest District tournament.

"He was all about hustle and technique," said Gary Boothe,

who played for Stephenson as well. "We just had no size. I was 6-foot-1 and a post player. He always worked with me on shooting with both hands inside. He tried to keep the team upbeat."

Boothe remembers his coach's generosity.

"I guess it was my senior year, and one day after school I was walking out to my car," Boothe said. "He had a pair of leather flip flops that he didn't like, and he gave those to me, and I must have worn those suckers for four years. That was just the kind of guy he was."

College try

A few months after struggling through a one-win season at Battle, Stafford Stephenson landed a gig as a graduate assistant for the Wake Forest University Demon Deacons of the Atlantic Coast Conference.

"When I tell people that I went from three wins in two years at John Battle to Wake Forest," Stephenson said, "it kind of blows their mind."

He had gotten to know Wake Forest head coach Carl Tacy really well when Tacy coached at Ferrum Junior College in Virginia for a few seasons in the late 1960s.

When Tacy gave Stephenson the opportunity to join the staff at Wake Forest and coach the program's junior varsity squad, he jumped at the chance.

"It was an eye-opening experience, and I really learned a lot," Stephenson said.

Winston-Salem, North Carolina, is where he first met Bobby Watson, and the two became fast friends while working together as assistants on Tacy's staff.

Stephenson later accepted the job at Wingate Junior College in North Carolina at Watson's urging.

Two years later, Watson hired his colleague at Evansville.

The dynamic Watson played basketball at Virginia Military Institute and had served two tours of duty in Vietnam.

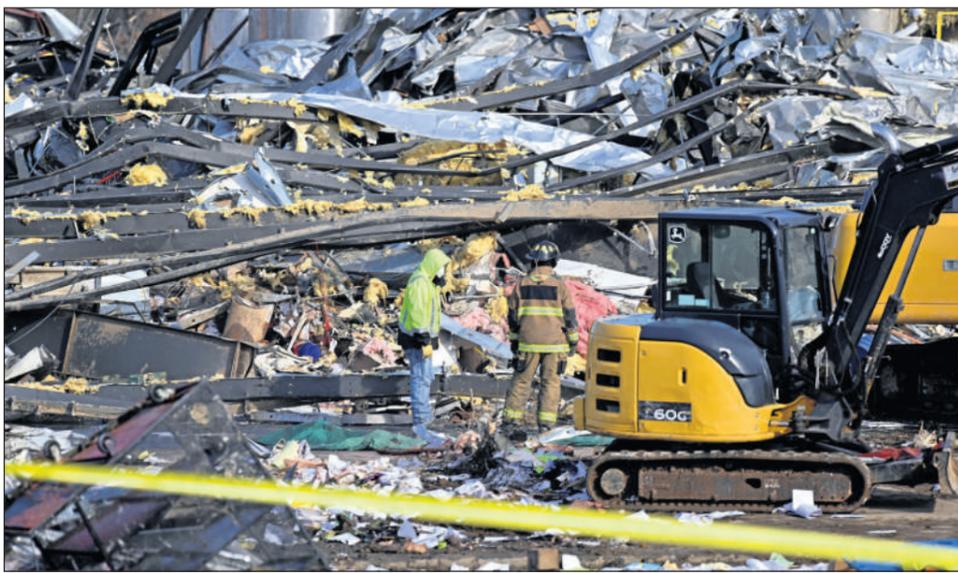
"Bobby did become my mentor," Stephenson said. "He was one of the good, and truly unique, people on the face of the Earth."

Bridging the gap

Three days before the crash, Evansville suffered a 102-76 loss to the Indiana State Sycamores, who featured a superstar named Larry Bird.

"They beat us every way there was to beat us," Stephenson said. "Larry Bird was unbelievable. Bobby walked into the locker room after the game, looked at everybody and said, 'We will not do this again. Don't get used to it.' He was really hot and really upset with all of us — players, coaches, himself."

Watson had said before the season that he wanted his three assistants to be present and sitting on the bench during the first four games against Western Kentucky, DePaul, Pittsburgh and Indiana State to gauge what caliber of players Evansville would need to acquire to compete at the DI level.



Scenes of devastation

Emergency personnel and residents returned to scenes of devastation and businesses on Saturday after an overnight tornado that carved a long path of destruction. Dozens were killed by a twister that could rival the longest on record. The storm may have touched down for nearly 250 miles.

AP PHOTOS



Crash

From Page A6

They might have to miss some games or road trips while out recruiting, but so be it.

That plan turned out to save Stephenson's life.

He was among the applicants to apply for the vacant head-coaching position after the plane crash as he looked to become Watson's successor.

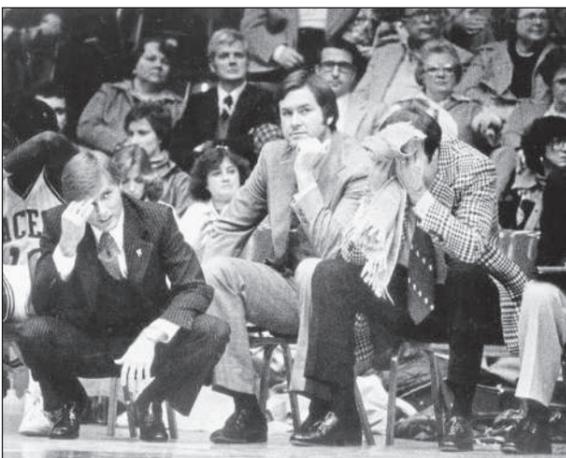
Stephenson was a finalist for the position (Milligan College coach Phil Worrell, who later coached at Virginia Intermont College, was also an applicant), but the job went to Dick Walters, who had built a small-school powerhouse at the College of DuPage in Illinois.

"I was disappointed, but there were no sour grapes," Stephenson said. "I wanted to stay on at Evansville and wanted to be a part of putting it back together. I told Dick that I would support him every step of the way regardless and that he would not hear a negative thing coming from me."

It was a classy move by a classy individual.

"Stafford Stephenson was a real bridge between the Bobby Walters team and the Dick Walters era, a steady presence in the midst of complete catastrophe," said Steve Beaven, who wrote the book "We Will Rise" about the crash and its aftermath. "He was respected in the community, the players liked him, and he was a terrific recruiter. I really admire the way he handled things after the crash."

By late January, Stephenson was back on the road recruiting, and he



EVANSVILLE COURIER & PRESS ARCHIVES

University of Evansville coaches, including Stafford Stephenson (with the towel) have a bad night during the 1978-79 season. The entire team and the head coach died in a plane crash in December 1977.



Stephenson

Stephenson.

"Stafford was a very respectful, meek and mild-mannered assistant coach," said Steve Sherwood, a 6-foot-8 center at Evansville from 1979-1982. "He was a great mentor to me as I was someone who was learning to adjust to the college basketball life and pace, coming from the rural, northern Illinois community. He always had the patience and time to talk with me about how to improve my basketball skills."

Sherwood also remembers that Stephenson was true to his Southwest Virginia roots in regard to some mountain music.

"He was involved in coordinating the team's public appearances, which during our first year were numerous," Sherwood said. "I think

said it was therapeutic in many ways.

Players tended to gravitate toward the laid-back

the university wanted the team to appear within the community as much as possible to help with the healing process.

"I recall that whenever I traveled with Stafford to those meet and greets, he loved to listen to country music. He always had country music playing on the radio when possible. That was the old style of country music, not the country music as we know it today."

Just like his musical preference, Stephenson's work ethic and attention to detail never waned.

"He was a great X's and O's guy," said Gary Marriott, who was an assistant on Walters' staff with Stephenson. "He could come back with a scouting report, and you'd know when the other team went to the bathroom at half-time. He was a very smart basketball mind. He was up front, honest and there was no B.S. His office was right next to mine, and he was always there bright and early every day working. He was a dedicated family man."

Stephenson departed

Evansville after the 1980-81 season for a job as an assistant at Southern Illinois as it was a bump in pay. The Purple Aces would make the NCAA Tournament in 1982 as Stephenson had helped get them on the right track.

He would spend four seasons there before resigning following the 1984-85 season as the Salukis were caught up in a scandal that led to star player Kenny Perry being accused of getting payments from one of the team's boosters.

"It was one of those things where there are two sides to every story," Stephenson said. "That's all I can say. It was unfortunate. ... The people at Southern Illinois were good to me, but I could see the handwriting on the wall."

The road of always being on the road and the demands of college coaching when it wasn't nearly as lucrative as it is now and with a wife and kids at home, Stephenson decided to leave coaching and enter the insurance business.

Now retired and residing in High Point, North Carolina, Evansville is never far from the 74-year-old Stephenson's mind. A photo of the 1977-78 squad hung on the wall of his State Farm Insurance office for years.

Lasting legacy

On Nov. 14, 1970, an airplane carrying Marshall University's football team crashed on the way back from a game in North Carolina and all 75 people onboard were killed.

The list of deceased included Rick Tolley, Marshall's 30-year-old head coach. Tolley had been a teacher and coach at John

Battle himself for a couple of years in the 1960s.

Seven years later, a twist of fate kept a 30-year-old former Battle teacher and coach from dying in another one of sport's biggest tragedies.

"I remember that Marshall plane crash, but it didn't have much impact on me at the time, because there was nothing to compare it to at that point," Stephenson said. "Since then, I've become very aware of that."

Monday marks the 44th anniversary of the event in Evansville.

Stephenson has been back to the city a few times since he coached there, and he spoke at a memorial several years ago when the Purple Aces moved into their new arena and dedicated

a wing to those in the crash.

The events of Dec. 13, 1977, and the ensuing dark days still remain vivid in Stephenson's mind as do memories of those who were lost.

"I want to have those kids still be remembered because they were special," Stephenson said. "I know that's easy to say, but they were a unique caliber of kids. Any time an opportunity comes up or people ask me about it, I want them to know what kind of players they were, but more importantly, what kind of people they were. You wonder what they would be doing today. They would have happy lives, I would think."

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DAVID CRIGGER/BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

Bristol Tennessee City Council will be forming an independent tourism board this summer after voting not to continue its working relationship with Bristol Chamber of Commerce after nearly 36 years. Above, the chamber's office at State and Volunteer.

Bristol, Tennessee

Council moving ahead with independent tourism organization

BY MARIA BASILEO
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

BRISTOL, Tenn. — A free-standing destination marketing organization will take over control of marketing Bristol, Tennessee this summer following the termination of an agreement for those services

between Bristol Tennessee City Council and the Bristol Chamber of Commerce.

City Council plans to incorporate the organization — composed of stakeholders within the tourism community and

See **TOURISM**, Page A7

HC Stay up to date with local and national coronavirus coverage

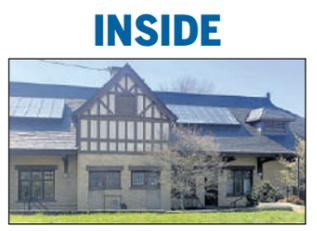
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COVID-19 PANDEMIC

LOCATION	#CASES	#DEATHS
Worldwide	135,076,300+	2,921,300+
United States	31,148,400+	561,700+
Virginia	634,325	10,458
Tennessee	822,085	12,001

#VACCINATED IN VIRGINIA: 3,036,315
#VACCINATED IN TENNESSEE: 3,237,146

SOURCES: Johns Hopkins, Virginia and Tennessee Departments of Health, AP



Outdoors shop opens in Abingdon train depot » B1

Thank you, Allen Torbert, for subscribing to the Bristol Herald Courier.

66/44
Weather » A10



50 YEARS LATER: A REMEMBRANCE

FOREVER LINKED



AP PHOTO

Actor George C. Scott portrays Gen. George S. Patton in the movie "Patton." Scott, who was born in Wise, Virginia, won the Academy Award for best actor for his role in "Patton," on April 15, 1971. Scott, who scorned the Academy Awards as contrived and degrading, said he would send the Oscar back if it was sent to him.

Like the man he played, Wise native George C. Scott was a rebel

BY TIM HAYES | BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

Actress Goldie Hawn, in her black spaghetti-strap dress adorned with flowers, stepped to the microphone inside the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles on April 15, 1971, to present the Academy Award for Best Actor. ♦ On the other side of the country — three time zones away — in Southwest Virginia and Northeast Tennessee, many folks were probably tuned into the NBC telecast on Channel 5. Perhaps they were waiting for the local newscast on WCYB or had just not bothered to change the dial after sitting through "The Flip Wilson Show," "Ironside" and "Adam 12."

See **SCOTT**, Page A4



EARL NEIKIRK/SPECIAL TO THE HERALD COURIER

A sign simply states "Birthplace of George C. Scott Stage, Television, and Film Actor" as you turn off U.S. Highway 23 toward the town of Wise, Virginia.

INSIDE: CLASSIFIED E1-8 | COMICS INSERT | DEATHS B2-3 | OPINION A8 | SCOREBOARD C2 | TELEVISION B6

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Scott

From Page A1

Their interest was likely piqued when Hawn rattled off the names of the five nominees for an Oscar, the ultimate artistic accolade — George C. Scott in “Patton,” James Earl Jones for “The Great White Hope,” Melvyn Douglas in “I Never Sang For My Father,” Ryan O’Neal in “Love Story” and Jack Nicholson for “Five Easy Pieces.”

“I can’t wait,” Hawn softly said to the audience as she proceeded to rip open the envelope that had just been given to her by a stagehand.

“Oh my God,” the 25-year-old blonde actress then bemusedly exclaimed. “The winner is George C. Scott in ‘Patton.’”

Of course, it was a big deal in these parts as Scott was born in Wise, Virginia, and became the first native-born son to win an Oscar for Best Actor.

Yet, it was an even bigger deal in Hollywood as Scott became the first actor to outright refuse acceptance of the iconic gold statue. Scott had compared the ceremonies that dated back to 1929 to a “two-hour meat parade” and called them “degrading.”

He eschewed the event and was at home watching the National Hockey League playoffs that evening as “Patton” producer Frank McCarthy walked to the stage and was handed the award in Scott’s stead.

Thursday will mark 50 years since the occurrence of a moment that remains memorable in the motion picture industry, and footage of Hawn’s announcement of Scott’s win has more than 350,000 views on YouTube.

“It was an enormous decision that got a lot of press,” said David Sheward, who wrote a 2008 biography of Scott.

It was a decision made by a man with an enormous personality himself and whose magnum opus was “Patton,” a portrayal of an enigmatic, larger-than-life military man depicted by an enigmatic, larger-than-life thespian.

“Patton — A salute to a Rebel,” was a phrase uttered in the trailer for the film and was also used in promotional materials.

That could also describe the Southwest Virginia native who brought the four-star general to life on the big screen.

“He was a very complicated person,” Sheward said. “He would not suffer fools gladly; he wanted to do good work as far as being an actor goes, but I think his life is kind of tragic in that he allowed his temper and his alcoholism and his temperament to get in the way of his reaching, I think, his full stature as an actor.”

Wise beginnings

George Campbell Scott was a son of coal-mining country, and even though he left Southwest Virginia as a toddler, he never forgot his roots and made frequent return trips to visit relatives.

Scott was the second child of George Dewey Scott and Helena Slempp Scott and was born on Oct. 18, 1927.

“His dad was a very ambitious man. It was kind of a weird dynamic between his father and mother,” Sheward said. “His father started out as a coal miner and then they moved to Michigan. He became a supervisor [in the auto industry] and then started in business in Michigan and worked his way up. He was very much all business and kind of gruff.”

“His mother was very artistic. She wrote poetry and she read it on the radio. Her nickname was ‘Honey.’ ... I think in growing up there was this conflict between being this tough, traditional type of guy and also wanting to express himself artistically.”

Scott’s mother died just before his eighth birthday and was buried in Big Stone Gap.

Her death — and the four-year stint he served in the Marines — had a profound impact on him.

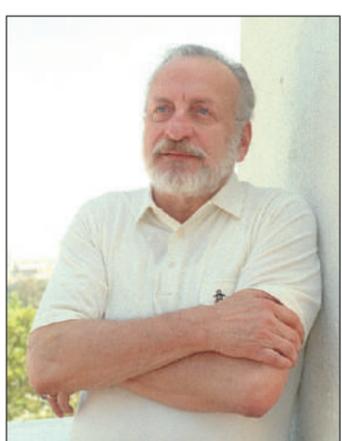
“He dug ditches for the dead when he was in the Marine Corps,” said Karen Riehl, an author/actress who wrote “Love and Madness: My Private Years with George C. Scott” in 2017. “He felt that and losing his



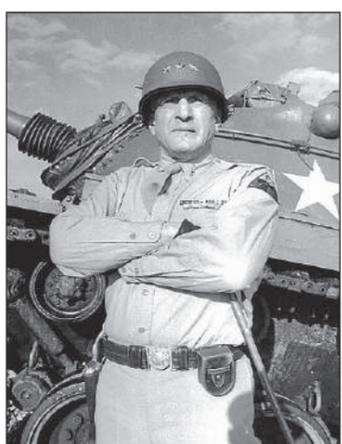
Charles Finley (right), owner of the Oakland A’s, presents an “Oscar” to actor George C. Scott during pregame ceremonies before the American League playoff game between Oakland and Detroit in this 1972 photo in Oakland, California.



Actress Goldie Hawn announces that George C. Scott had won the Academy Award for best actor for his role in “Patton,” at ceremonies at the Los Angeles Music Center in Hollywood, Los Angeles, on April 15, 1971.



Actor George C. Scott is shown in this Sept. 1, 1986, photo.



Actor George C. Scott portrays Gen. George S. Patton in the movie “Patton.”

mom at age of 7 was why he had demons.”

While attending the University of Missouri after his military service on the G.I. Bill, Scott initially sought a career in journalism.

“In sort of a contradictory way, he was very shy with people, and he couldn’t get himself to intrude on people’s lives to the extent you have to do as a journalist,” Sheward said. “When he tried out for a production at the theater department — “The Winslow Boy” — he got the part, and it was of a gruff, no-nonsense bulldozer of a lawyer. He got the part, and he found, ‘Oh, if I’m somebody else, I can unleash all this energy and all this confidence in myself.’ He found out that way of how he could express himself.”

By 1958, he was on Broadway for the first time in “Comes a Day” and became a force on stage in quick order. Television and movie roles soon followed.

He earned Best Supporting Actor nominations from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for “Anatomy of a Murder” in 1959 and “The Hustler” in 1961. He often played military characters, including in satirical form as General Buck

“What I admired, and why he was such a titan to me, were the sly choices and touches he could bring to individual moments. That’s what separates good actors from bad actors, and exquisite actors from solid ones.”

— Evan Handler, actor on George C. Scott

Turgidson in “Dr. Strangelove.” He later appeared as Brigadier Gen. Harlan Bache in “Taps,” a 1980 film about a military school.

“He did gaze out at us during that large muster scene and reminisce that it reminded him of his own days in the service,” actor Evan Handler, who was 19 years old at the time and had a minor role in the movie, said in a March interview. “I can’t guarantee if I’ve got the exact ages right anymore, but he did say, ‘I went in at 17, and came out at 21 and a lush.’ I’d never heard anyone say anything quite like that before.”

His imbibing and on-set outbursts became the stuff of legend, and his volatile life carried outside the workplace as he was married four times. However, when the director said, “Action,” Scott always delivered. That became apparent when shooting began in 1969 for a role that would change Scott’s career.

“This is the film that really made him a star,” Sheward said.

He was cast as George S. Patton, a legendary figure who had his own ties to Virginia, having attended Virginia Military Institute in Lexington for a time.

George C. Scott and George S. Patton would end up being forever linked and for the last 50 years, it’s been hard to think of the latter without picturing the former.

“One of the great war movies of all time,” said Colin Barron, a film historian from Scotland who has written several books on World War II’s depiction in cinema, in an interview last month.

Iconic role

The 172-minute biopic opens with its most famous scene, a gripping and sometimes profane five-minute speech delivered by Patton about America’s military goals in World War II. He is

decked out in uniform with a plethora of medals and decorations with his pearl-handled revolvers at his side.

“He thought that scene should have been put last,” Sheward said. “He thought if you start the film like that, you have nowhere to go. They didn’t tell him and he was a bit angry about it. But I think overall, he was pleased with it and how it turned out.”

The movie did have other places to go and other scenes where Scott was superb, like when he visits a field hospital.

“In the first half of this scene, he displays great kindness and compassion towards wounded soldiers,” Barron said. “Then he flips when he comes across a soldier suffering from battle fatigue and promptly slaps him. This scene therefore portrays both sides of Patton’s mercurial personality. ... I think [Scott] did an excellent job. It is hard to see how he could have done better. All the criticisms I have of the film are unrelated to Scott’s performance.”

The goal of any biopic is to get the viewer to think he is actually watching the subject of the film and not the actor portraying him. Scott had dived into every newsreel and book he could find on Patton and pulled it off.

The only difference between them is the voice — Scott’s famous gravelly voice was much different than the general’s high-pitched tone. Still, Scott became Patton.

“George C. Scott captured Patton’s bluster and reflection and gives an unforgettable portrait of a commander whose foot was always on the accelerator,” said Dave Luhrssen, author of “World War II on Film.” “He didn’t know when to apply the brakes on his behavior or public comments.”

That the two men shared common traits in their behavior made it a perfect marriage of actor and subject.

“For all of Patton’s legendary bombast, Scott plays him in a way that is never predictable,” said Robert Burgoyne, a movie historian and a professor of film studies at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. “He is just as likely to resort to charm as he is to display an outsized temper. Scott plays Patton as flamboyant, narcissistic and with signs of a pathological megalomania. But he also gives the character a quality of warmth. ... This quality of warmth also comes through in tiny, throw-away moments, such as when Patton joins the troops marching toward Bastogne, grinning from ear to ear as he walks with his men.”

Karl Malden’s performance as General Omar Bradley and Jerry Goldsmith’s unique score were also commended when it was released in early 1970, at a crucial time in the history of Hollywood.

“The film stands at the crossroads of the Classic Hollywood studio blockbuster and the emergence of the New Hollywood film initiated by films such as “Bonnie and Clyde” and “The Graduate.” It has an unapologetic grandeur about it, both in terms of the charismatic performance of George C. Scott and in terms of the production design, which is outsized and spectacular,” Burgoyne said. “But the film also dwells, at length, on the interior life of Patton, especially his

strange talent for self-destruction. The screenplay, by Francis Ford Coppola, contributes to this sense of a film that straddles two distinct eras.”

It was against that backdrop that Scott refused to accept the prize for his work, one of seven Academy Awards “Patton” was awarded.

Perhaps he was still ticked off he hadn’t won that Best Supporting Actor for “Anatomy of a Murder” back in 1958, or perhaps George C. Scott was just doing what George C. Scott wanted to do.

He’d rather watch hockey than take part in something he felt was hokey.

“The whole feeling of the country at the time was real anti-establishment,” Sheward said. “The Academy Awards at this point were seen as very traditional; every year it was the same thing, Bob Hope was always the host, there were always these corny jokes and at the time it was not the best performance that won, but whoever had the most friends in the industry and whoever was the nicest guy and whoever made the most money for their respective studio got the award and not what was the best performance. So, Scott said that was his reason for saying he wanted no part of it.”

Lasting legacy

One of George C. Scott’s final roles brought him back to Southwest Virginia for filming in 1996, kind of a full-circle moment.

A CBS made-for-TV movie entitled “Country Justice” was shot in Tazewell County and debuted on Jan. 14, 1997. Fittingly, Scott portrayed a coal miner named Clayton Hayes in the crime drama.

Don Diamont of soap opera fame was cast as the villain.

“The highlight of my professional life, for sure,” Diamont said in a telephone interview last month. “I was really hopeful I would get that part largely so I could work with him. That’s just a fact. I had certainly seen “Patton” and some of his other work. The prospect of that was really enthralling to me.”

Diamont had grown up admiring Scott’s work, but wasn’t sure if working with one of his acting heroes would turn into a dream job or a nightmare.

“The first scenes I filmed were with George, and it was my first day on set,” Diamont said. “They were confrontational scenes, and I had a certain amount of anxiety. His reputation sort of preceded him, because I had heard of how irascible and challenging he could be.

“I found him to be the completely opposite. He was friendly and charming. I said, ‘Mr. Scott, Would you like to run lines?’ and he said, ‘Call me George and however you are comfortable rehearsing, that’s what we’ll do.’ It was just an absolute privilege to work opposite him, and he was just delightful and a total pro.”

Diamont got Scott to autograph some pages from the script where they shared dialogue and also got Scott to sign a movie poster from “Patton.”

“Those are definitely prized possessions,” Diamont said.

Scott died on Sept. 22, 1999, of a ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm at his home in California. He was 71.

A brown sign with white letters stating “Birthplace of George C. Scott Stage, Television, and Film Actor” sits just off U.S. Highway 23 as you enter Wise, Virginia.

“Patton” remains a timeless work, as does some of his other work. A viewer may stumble on one of those works the next time they are flipping through the channels.

So, whatever happened to the Oscar he refused?

“The last I heard,” Sheward said, “it was still in a warehouse belonging to the Academy in Los Angeles.”

While the trophy collects dust, Scott’s work still shines bright.

“What I admired, and why he was such a titan to me, were the sly choices and touches he could bring to individual moments,” Handler said. “That’s what separates good actors from bad actors, and exquisite actors from solid ones.”



INSIDE

Special insert on the 20-year anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks



Virginia High moves to 3-0 with win over Patrick Henry

SPORTS » B1

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Forever changed by tragedy | SEPT. 11, 2001

How we remember

20 years later, modern influences affect our recollections

BY TED ANTHONY
AP National Writer

SHANKSVILLE, Pa. — The hills in Shanksville seem to swallow sound. The plateau that Americans by the millions ascend to visit the Flight 93 National Memorial, to think of those who died in this southwestern Pennsylvania expanse, sits just above much of the landscape, creating a pocket of quiet precisely where quiet needs to be.

It is a place that encourages the act of remembering.

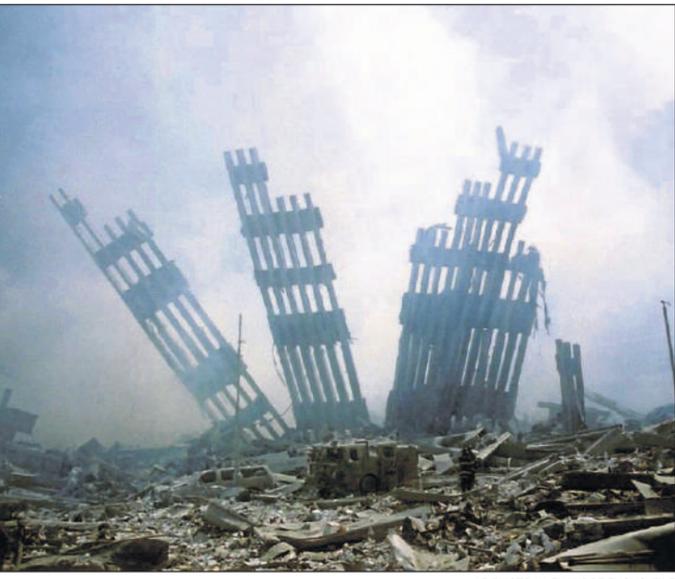
Twenty years have passed since United Flight 93 made its final descent, chaos unfolding aboard as buildings burned 300 miles to the east. Nearly one-fifth of the country is too young to remember firsthand the day that changed everything. Yet at the memorial's overlook, near the patch where the plane hit, remembering is the whole point.

Remembering is not merely

a state of mind. As those who beseech us to never forget the Holocaust have long insisted, it is an act. And when loss and trauma are visited upon human beings, the act of remembering takes many forms.

Remembering is political. Those who disagree about the fate of Confederate statues across the American South demonstrate that, as do those who dispute how

See **REMEMBER**, Page A5



AP PHOTO/ALEXANDRE FUCHS, FILE

In this Sept. 11, 2001, photo, the remains of the World Trade Center stand amid other debris following the terrorist attack on the buildings in New York.

'I can't forget it'

Former Sullivan South pitcher recounts 9/11 in New York

BY TIM HAYES
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

To understand Dan Wright's mood that Monday night 20 years ago, it is perhaps an adage uttered years before by legendary Major League Baseball pitcher/pitching coach/philosopher Johnny Sain that sums it up best.

"He used to say a pitcher had a kind of special feeling after he did really well in a ballgame," former New York Yankees hurler Jim Bouton wrote of Sain in his 1970 book "Ball Four." "John called it the cool of the evening, when you could sit and relax and not worry about being in there for three or four days; the job done, a good job, and now it was up to somebody else to go out there the next day and do the slogging. The cool of the evening."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

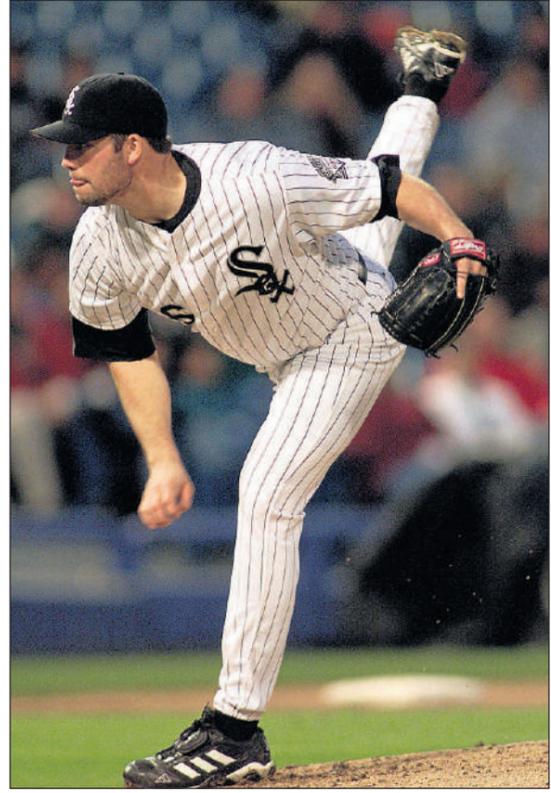
Dan Wright, who graduated from Sullivan South in Kingsport and pitched for the Bristol White Sox before stints in the major leagues, was in New York on Sept. 11, 2001.

Wright was indeed enjoying the proverbial cool of the evening, well, in the real cool of the evening on Sept. 10, 2001.

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AP PHOTO

Dan Wright pitched in the majors for the Chicago White Sox.

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Folk Soul Revival finale to help cap off today's shows

BY DAVID MCGEE
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

When a group of area musicians got together in 2008 to form a band, one of their earliest goals was to play at the Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion.

Tonight, those friends and that band — Folk Soul Revival — will say farewell by playing their final live show, fittingly, on the Piedmont



Avenue stage at the 20th anniversary Rhythm & Roots Reunion. The band and their loyal fans — known far and wide as "the Congregation,"

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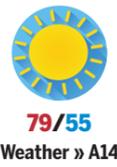


Folk Soul Revival performs on the Piedmont Stage on Friday night during the opening of the annual Rhythm & Roots Reunion.

DAVID CRIGGER/BHC PHOTO

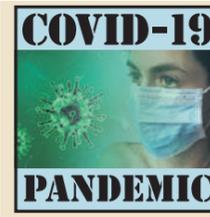


Thank you, **Andrew Hargroves**, for subscribing to the Bristol Herald Courier.



INSIDE

Graham rolls past Richlands 35-0 for its second straight victory **» B1**



LOCATION	#CASES	#DEATHS
Worldwide	223,798,000+	4,616,100+
United States	40,859,100+	658,900+
Virginia	801,827	12,036
Tennessee	1,124,713	13,890

% FULLY VACCINATED IN VA.: 57.7%
% FULLY VACCINATED IN TENN.: 42.9%
SOURCES: Johns Hopkins, Virginia and Tennessee Departments of Health, AP

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Wright

From Page A1

Poor weather drifted into Northeast Ohio as late Monday bled into the wee hours of Tuesday, with rain falling and fog rolling in from Lake Erie, hampering the scheduled departure from Cleveland Hopkins International Airport for the chartered jet carrying the Chicago White Sox.

No delays were going to bother Dan Wright, however, as life continued to be good for Chicago's 23-year-old rookie pitcher who had graduated from Sullivan South High School in Kingsport, Tennessee, five years prior.

He had been in the big leagues for less than two months, having been promoted from the minor leagues back in July.

His MLB debut had come against the Boston Red Sox at storied Fenway Park.

In just his third game at the highest level, the right-hander had carried a no-hitter into the seventh inning in a victory against the Tampa Bay Devil Rays.

And he had just dominated the Cleveland Indians in front of 38,244 fans at Jacobs Field, yielding one run over seven efficient innings in stifling a loaded lineup that would make the MLB playoffs.

He gave up a second-inning home run to future Hall of Famer Jim Thome, but that was his only blemish on a night when he threw 99 pitches.

Now, he relaxed in the airport as his teammates — guys like Ray Durham, Jose Canseco and Paul Konerko — mulled about, waiting for the weather to clear so they could head to New York City. The following day, a three-game series with the vaunted Yankees would begin.

The team's flight was eventually cleared for takeoff shortly after midnight. The entourage of White Sox arrived at their hotel near Grand Central Station in midtown Manhattan around 2 a.m. on Sept. 11.

"The way it worked, they would bring the suitcases into the hotel in kind of an order," Wright said. "Of course, the veteran players got their bags first, and I was down at the bottom of the pecking order, so I didn't even worry about getting my suitcase that night. I just went up to my room and went to sleep."

Wright's cool of the evening vibe was followed by one of the darkest days in the history of the United States as his first glimpse of the Big Apple came on a fateful day.

"I remember feeling good on the trip to New York," Wright said. "It was a really strong Cleveland lineup I had faced, and I had some success against them. I was really feeling good about it, but at that time, of course, I didn't know what would happen in the next 24 hours."

First trip to NYC

It's accurate to describe Dan Wright as a country boy.

He was born and raised in Arkansas, but moved to Northeast Tennessee prior to his junior year of high school.

Wright emerged as the big man on campus at Sullivan South, starting at quarterback for the Rebels' football team, scoring points in bunches on the basketball court and amassing impressive statistics on the pitcher's mound.

A stellar career at the University of Arkansas came next.

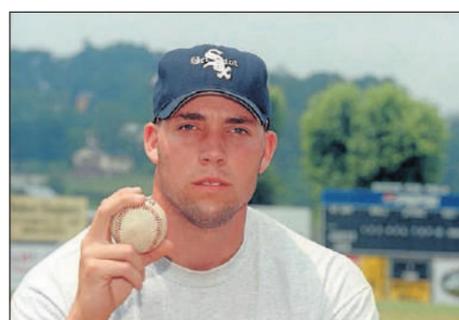
After being a second-round draft pick of the White Sox in 1999, his first minor league assignment came with the Appalachian League's Bristol White Sox as his professional career began not far from his old high school.

Burlington, Iowa, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and Birmingham, Alabama, were the next map dots on his baseball journey.

"I remember Dan just being a good guy and getting along with him," said Bob Howry, a relief pitcher for the Chicago White Sox in 2001.

Wright was still adjusting to big-city life in 2001, getting acquainted with Chicago and enjoying MLB road trips to such places as Anaheim, Seattle, Detroit and Kansas City.

Sept. 11 happened to be his first day in NYC.



Dan Wright of Kingsport pitched for the Bristol White Sox in 1999 on the way to the Majors.

"I remember driving across the bridge, leaving New York. Not one person on the bus said one word for about an hour-and-a-half. ... As you looked back toward the city, you just couldn't believe it. The skyline was changed, and it was still smoking. You're just thinking about all the people who lost somebody. It's terrible."

— Dan Wright, Sullivan South graduate on departing NYC on Sept. 12, 2001

"I was looking forward to it," Wright said. However, that Tuesday morning began with a frantic phone call from Matt Ginter, Wright's fellow pitcher and one of his closest friends on the team.

"At first, I thought it was a wake-up call. He said 'Hey, did you see that? They flew a plane into the World Trade Center.' It was early in the morning, and I hung up the phone and rolled back over. I was still asleep where it didn't compute that the building was in the same city I was until I laid there for a minute," Wright said. "I was wondering how far I was from it and was trying to put it all together before I got up and went to the lobby."

Pretty soon, Wright found out what had happened.

Two planes, piloted by terrorists, had flown into the World Trade Center's towers.

Thousands were dead, chaos erupted and questions outnumbered answers.

Wright and his teammates could walk to the corner of the adjacent street where they were staying. From that vantage point, they could see the smoke billowing from Ground Zero.

"It was awful," Wright said. "I just remember the feeling of panic that everybody had for the people that lived there. People were coming back up the street that had been there. Their cars were covered in ash or whatever it was."

Wright's parents — his father, Roger, and mother, Jo — were vacationing in Colorado when they saw what had transpired.

"I was going to turn on SportsCenter and see if they had any report on Dan's game against Cleveland," Jo Wright said. "Dan had given up a home run, so I figured I'll at least see him turn his back and watch the ball go out if nothing else."

"As I turned on the TV to look for ESPN, the plane had just flown into one of the towers in New York City, and they were first reporting on it. I told Roger to come look at it. ... We began to watch the news coverage and then we looked at each other and said, 'Dan's supposed to be in New York.' We didn't know where they were staying, and all we had was his cell phone number. We tried calling and couldn't get through."

That produced some tense moments for those family members of the White Sox players.

"I probably hadn't even had a cell phone very long," Dan Wright said. "The cell phones were jammed up. I kept getting a busy tone."

Eventually, Wright got in touch with his aunt and later that night talked to his parents.

"We felt better once we heard his voice," Jo Wright said. "I remember him telling Roger, 'Dad, I'm scared,' and Roger said, 'I am, too.'"

In a state of shock, Wright was able to take solace in a scene he saw overhead.

"I was uneasy for quite some time," Wright said. "I really didn't know how to compare it to a normal day to New York City since I hadn't been there before, but the streets were empty that night, and nobody was really outside. ... There were military planes doing laps around the city at some point, and that was comforting because I remember thinking, 'Those are our planes, I feel safer now.'"

Heading home

Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig postponed all the league's games indefinitely in the aftermath as Wright and his teammates quarantined in a hotel, most glued to the television.

Chicago White Sox manager Jerry Manuel had played for the Appalachian League's Bristol Tigers in 1972, while outfielder Carlos Lee had been a star slugger for the Bristol White Sox in 1995.

Mike Gellinger was Chicago's computer scouting analyst at the time and would become the manager of the Bristol White Sox a dozen years later.

Wright shared a field and clubhouse and wore the same uniform as those guys, but their bond grew tighter as they leaned on each other during a time of uncertainty.

"Initially, we just didn't know what to do," Wright said. "Typically, it's a very routine-oriented job — get up, go to the park, play a game. All that was off the table."

The group from Chicago would eventually be cleared to leave the city via a 57-seat bus around 9 a.m. on Sept. 12.

"We loaded it down," Wright said. "Some people had their families, and we got as many people as we could on the bus and went straight through. We got a police escort that led us. We got to leave before some other people."

The departure would provide one of the most vivid — and surreal — scenes for Wright as the White Sox left the chaos behind and embarked on a 12-hour, 820-mile journey to Chicago.

"I remember driving across the bridge, leaving New York," Wright said. "Not one person on the bus said one word for about an hour-and-a-half. ... As you looked back toward the city, you just couldn't believe it. The skyline was changed, and it was still smoking. You're just thinking about all the people who lost somebody. It's terrible."

'I can't forget it'

Wright and the White Sox returned to New York a few weeks later to make up the games that had been postponed in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

"We actually stayed at a different hotel that time," Wright recalled.

Wright started against the Yankees on Oct. 2 at famed Yankee Stadium. The buzz at the ballpark was a little different in what would be Wright's final start of the 2001 season.

A rookie year that began with personal glory, now ended in a city that was still recovering.

"Everybody at that time was on alert still, and there was increased security," Wright said. "It was a weird feeling going back."

Shoulder injuries led to the end of Wright's playing career as he threw his last pitch in 2006.

He appeared in 70 career big league games, going 20-26 with a 5.65 ERA over his time as a major leaguer.

Wright's a scout with the Philadelphia Phillies these days, traveling to ballparks across the country.

The 43-year-old will be with his wife and 17-year-old son Saturday at their home in Bentonville, Arkansas, before departing for a scouting mission to Minneapolis the next day.

As occurs every year during the anniversary of the tragedy, those hours in the immediate aftermath will enter his thoughts.

From the cool of the evening to scenes forever burned in his memory 20 years later. "Absolutely," Wright said. "I try not to fly on that day. I know it doesn't matter with that, but I can't forget it."

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Remember

From Page A1

much the war on terror and its toll should be part of discussions about 9/11 memories.

Remembering arrives in ground zero ceremonies and moments of silence and prayers upon prayers, both public and private. It shows itself in folk memorials like those erected at the sides of lonely roads to mark the sites of traffic deaths.

It is embedded in the names of places, like the road that leads to the Flight 93 memorial — the Lincoln Highway. It surfaces in the retrieval of "flashbulb memories" — those where-were-you-when-this-happened moments that stick with us, sometimes accurately, sometimes not.

There are personal memories and cultural memories and political memories, and the lines often blur.

And for generations, remembering has been presented to us in monuments and memorials like Shanksville's, fine-tuned to evoke memories and emotions in certain ways.

Yet while monuments stand, remembering itself evolves. How 9/11 is remembered depends on when 9/11 is remembered. What, then, does remembering come to mean on a 20th anniversary of an event like 9/11, even as its echoes are still shaking the foundations of everything?

"Our present influences how we remember the past — sometimes in ways that are known and sometimes in ways that we don't realize," says Jennifer Talarico, a psychology professor at Lafayette College in Pennsylvania who studies how people form personal memories of public events.

Evidence of that is obvious in the past five weeks in Afghanistan, where a 20-year war waged in direct response to 9/11 ended pretty much where it began: with the repressive and violent Taliban in charge once more.

But even within more static forms of memory, such as the Flight 93 National Memorial, the question of how remembering evolves hangs over so much.

In the visitors' center, visceral, painful artifacts of the moment still bring back the past with astonishing efficiency; twisted, scarred cutlery from in-flight meals is particularly breathtaking. But the variety of remembering that is presented yards away at the quiet overlook and its thoughtful memorial feels more permanent, more eternal.

Paul Murdoch of Los Angeles, the lead architect on the memorial, says it was carefully calibrated to resonate across multiple stages of memory about the event and its implications.

"You can imagine a memorial approach that sort of freezes anger in time, or freezes fear. And that can be a very expressionistic piece of art. But I feel like for something to endure over a long period of time, I think it has to operate a different way," says Murdoch, who co-designed the memorial with his wife, Milena.

UK leader: 9/11 attackers failed to make the world live in fear

Associated Press

LONDON — The Sept. 11 attackers failed in their aim of making people in open societies live in "permanent fear," British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said as he marked the 20th anniversary of 9/11.

In a video message due to be played at a ceremony on Saturday, Johnson said the U.S. was "the world's greatest democracy," and it was a reflection of its openness that "people of almost every nationality and religion" were among almost 3,000 people killed in the attacks. Sixty-seven British nationals were among those killed when hijacked planes crashed into New York's World Trade Centre, the Pentagon in Washington and a field in Pennsylvania.

Johnson said the attackers "tried to destroy the faith of free peoples everywhere in the open societies which terrorists despise and which we cherish" — and failed.

"But while the terrorists imposed their burden of grief and suffering, and while the threat persists today, we can now say with the perspective of 20 years that they failed to shake our belief in freedom and democracy; they failed to drive our nations apart, or cause us to abandon our values, or to live in permanent fear," Johnson said.

"The fact that we are coming together today — in sorrow but also in faith and resolve — demonstrates the failure of terrorism and the strength of the bonds between us."

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