



## **KNIGHT PUTS HUMOROUS SPIN ON SERIOUS TOPIC**

**By Bill Beck  
Elkhart (IN) Truth  
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BRISTOL -- Bob Knight knows how to put a humorous spin on a very human subject.

Having bred much of his disciplinarian bench style as a young coach at West Point, Knight's return to Indiana for the third annual Camouflage Kids fund-raiser hit close to home.

"There's something special about people in the military," Knight said. "Where the hell would we be without it?"

The "Camo Kids" project gathers donations used to send children of active-duty U.S. soldiers to collegiate sporting events around the country.

Knight took a series of prompts from close friend Digger Phelps to serve as a celebrity attraction to an event which brought more in than 400 invited guests and college sponsors to the Bristol hills home of Ray Stults and Lana Davis.

"Getting to this house," Knight said tongue-in-cheek, "Would have taken Lewis & Clark three days."

Knight's journey actually took longer.

"Digger called me and said you have to come to Elkhart on the 9th of September. I said, 'Alright, I'll be there.' A couple of weeks later he said I had to be in Elkhart at 5 o'clock," Knight said. "When we told me to be in Elkhart, it was about two months before he told me what's it all about."

The focus of the trip turned out to be a no-brainer for Knight.

Recognition of the Armed Forces, no matter what and no matter where, became part of Knight's lecture stops many years ago.

Once he started, he never forgot it.

"In the late 80s, I felt so strongly about that, that I started by asking everybody in the audience when I'd speak somewhere that anybody that served in World War II to stand," Knight said. "It was really neat to see. Then I changed it to everybody male or female that had served in the military to stand."

While the politics and casualties of the military consume nearly all of the headlines and news shows, service kids left behind have become the forgotten story.

It's a thread Knight said can't be ignored and should be embraced.

"A mother that's here while her husband is over in Afghanistan has to think, 'Well, there are people who appreciate what we're doing,'" Knight said. "The kids wouldn't understand it at this point, but boy the mothers would. And the dads over there would. They have to be tickled that somebody has thought about their kids."

"I don't think people realize that the eight years that he was at West Point, some 4,000 cadets graduated as officers of the United States Army," Phelps said of Knight. "There's no better person who knows West Point and what goes on in a cadets life for four years to become an officer."

Knight then could not resist a quick jab after a few soft punchlines.

"When I talk about the military, I talk about the military in total, but I never forget to say that we played Navy six times when I was at Army and we beat their (butt) every time. I never forget to include that."

## **'GENERAL' ENLISTS SUPPORT FOR TROOPS**

**By Curt Rallo  
South Bend (IN) Tribune  
September 10, 2008**

BRISTOL — When coach Bob Knight's 1968 Army team was considering its postseason destination, Knight's first concern was what would be best for West Point's students. Army had an invitation to play in the NCAA tournament, which meant a first-round game in either Blacksburg, Va., or Kingston, R.I.

Or, Army could accept a berth in the NIT, and play in nearby New York City.

Knight chose the NIT over the prestigious NCAA tournament, so the entire corps of cadets could get a break from the rigor of West Point and enjoy a day in New York.

"It turned out to be one of the dumbest things I ever decided to do because we played Notre Dame ... on St. Patrick's Day, and the two officials are McNally and Lennon," Knight joked. "We end up getting beat. Yet if I had to do it over again, I'd do it over again. It gives those kids a chance to get out of West Point. Get them out, let them go to New York and have a day away."

Knight, the only coach to win the NCAA, the NIT, an Olympic gold medal and a Pan-Am gold medal, was looking out for military personnel once again, helping raise funds Tuesday in Bristol for the Camouflage Kids effort.

Camouflage Kids is the brainchild of former Notre Dame and New York Knicks assistant coach Jeff Nix and Army veteran Ray Stults. The charity event, held at Stults' house, benefits the children of military personnel stationed overseas by providing them with opportunities to attend college basketball games and participate in basketball clinics.

Knight retired from coaching at Texas Tech on Feb. 4, of this past season with 10 games left in the regular season. He handed the reins of the Red Raiders over to his son, Patrick, after forging an overall career record of 902-371.

Knight won three national championships at Indiana University (1976, 1981, and 1987), but was dismissed from the school nearly eight years ago to the day.

"What these people have done with these kids is really unique and is a tremendous idea," Knight said of Camouflage Kids. "A mother who is (in the U.S.) while her husband is in Afghanistan, has to think, 'Well, there are really people who appreciate what we're doing.'"

Former Notre Dame coach and ESPN analyst Digger Phelps said Knight was a perfect choice to invite to the fundraiser because of his ties to West Point.

"There's no better person who knows West Point and what goes on in a cadet's life for four years to become an officer," Phelps said. "For coach Knight to come here and be a part of this, and to have the general here tonight who was there and graduated in '74 when Bob was at one time at West Point, that's the impact you look at. Don't spin the politicians. The real people who do care get involved."

Knight, who pointed out that he was 6-0 against Navy in his tenure at Army, has always been regarded as a strong supporter of military personnel. At his speaking engagements, he usually asks those who have served the country to stand and be recognized by the audience.

"I've been closer to a lot of people in the military than most people have by virtue of having coached there, but my feeling has always been, that there's something special about people in the military," Knight said. "There's something very special about somebody, male or female, who's served in the military, because where the (heck) would we be without it. We'd still have an English accent. You read about the march from Long Island into New Jersey, guys with rags on their feet. It's an amazing thing. These guys, who were squirrel hunters, defeated the greatest army in the world. That really, was the basis for our military, and that's the basis, the foundation, for all that's transpired since. I think we sometimes take it for granted."

Knight, who has done analysis for ESPN since leaving Texas Tech, said Pat Knight has an understanding of the game that will serve him well as a college coach.

"Once in a while, I've had to turn to Pat and say, 'How the (heck) did I win without you?'" Knight said. "He's like everybody's kid. He thinks at times that Dad is in a different era. I would like to think that he's learned about the game. He understood the game. I think I understood the game. There's a lot of guys who coached who don't have a clue, who don't understand the game. There are guys who officiate who don't understand the game. When you see somebody who does understand what's important and understands how to win ... that's what I hope he'll be able to do."

Knight's visit also enabled him to be reunited with a former player, Dane Fife, now the head coach at Indiana-Purdue Fort Wayne.

"There's been a lot of stuff made about this being the first recruiting day and coaches missing the event, but what we're doing here trumps anything that can happen," Fife said. "You have to have a safe place in order to have the opportunity to recruit, and there's nothing more important and more vital to this country than the men and women serving in the military, and to be able to take care of their kids while they're abroad, it's really a great honor to be involved in this. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else. It's amazing what Jeff Nix and Ray Stults are doing, and for Ray to open up his house like this, it's really special."

Notre Dame coach Mike Brey has been very involved in Camouflage Kids, knowing that many children in South Bend have a parent in Iraq through the local National Guard unit.

"This is powerful, it's really powerful," Brey said. "I went to Operation Hardwood a year ago, May ... and that was the first time I got to the front lines and got a feel of everything. I took my team by Walter Reed the day before we played Georgetown to visit the injured soldiers. Again, another powerful experience."

"Anything we can do to help support the men and women defending us, I'm on board," Brey continued. "We were very proud this year. Our Marquette game was a Camouflage Kids game, and I got goosebumps and we do the anthem and both teams are facing each other, but on the left sideline, were about 200 kids, and I'm looking over there saying, they've got one or both parents over defending us, I got emotional."

## **KNIGHT, OTHER COACHES IN AREA TO HELP MILITARY KIDS**

**By Steve Warden  
Fort Wayne (IN) Journal Gazette  
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BRISTOL – From the inception three years ago of Camouflage Kids – an Indiana-based non-profit organization that buys tickets for college athletic events for children of men and women in the military, former Notre Dame coach Digger Phelps has been one of the event's biggest supporters. Now he has help to spread the news.

Late Tuesday afternoon at the backyard fundraising event at the home of co-founder Ray Stults, former Indiana University and Texas Tech coach Bob Knight shook hands, did the media thing (repeatedly) and talked up the cause that last year enabled more than 1,500 military-family children to attend college basketball and football games. This time, "The General" gave way to so many other generals.

He admitted that because of his Army roots, where he coached eight seasons before he arrived at IU, he has always held a special feeling within his heart. And yes, in spite of what some say or think, Bob Knight has a heart.

"I've been closer to a lot of people in the military than most people by virtue of having coached (at West Point)," Knight said. "My feeling has always been that there's something special about people in the military. You don't have to have been in the military to be a patriotic American or to be a great American. You don't have to be a schoolteacher to be somebody who cares about education. But there's something special about a schoolteacher, I think. And I think there's something very special about somebody, male or female, that served in the military. Where the hell would we be without them? We'd still all have an English accent."

Which gave him reason to wander off on other fronts, from kidney pie (it tastes awful) to fishing in Russia (it took him 62 hours to get home) to his dear friend Don Haskins, the former UTEP coach who recently passed away. Although Haskins' most notable feat was to lead Texas Western (later UTEP) to the 1966 NCAA championship with an all-black starting lineup, Knight said Haskins' legacy is bigger than one game.

"That game doesn't define Haskins," Knight said. "His career defined Haskins. Nobody in the history of college basketball ever did more with the situation than he did. Where the hell can you find a basketball player in El Paso, Texas? ... I mean, let's be honest."

But while Knight briefly held court, he gave way to the reason behind his appearance. When Phelps, on the set of ESPN, asked him to appear at the fundraising event, Knight immediately said of course.

"Seriously, I'll do whatever they ask me," he said.

"Jeff (co-founder Jeff Nix) asked me if I could get Knight, and I said, 'No problem,' " Phelps said.

Nearly 30 universities, including Indiana, Notre Dame, Purdue, IPFW, Ball State and Butler have agreed to participate in the program.

"Anything we can do to help support the men and women defending us and fighting for us over there, I'm on full board," Notre Dame coach Mike Brey said. "Our Marquette game last year was a Camouflage Kids game, and I got goose bumps when we did the anthem, and our teams were facing each other.

"But on the sidelines were about 200 kids, and I'm looking over there saying that they've got one or both parents over there defending us. I got emotional looking at that."

## **WITH HIS NEW PASSION, NIX IS GIVING BACK**

**By Jim Melaro  
Olean (NY) Times Herald  
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For as long as Jeff Nix can remember, his life has centered around the game of basketball.

A former Big 30 All-Star at Portville, Nix went on to play at Canisius College.

From there, he served as an assistant coach at Notre Dame, Canisius, Saint Francis, Loyola and Xavier.

Until recently, however, he was a permanent fixture with the New York Knicks, earning the reputation as one of basketball's most respected "inside men."

For nearly two decades, he served the Knicks in various capacities, from scouting director to assistant coach to assistant general manager.

He oversaw the club's NBA draft preparations and scouted the college, professional and European circuit.

Over the last three years, though, he's devoted his life to a new cause.

Nix is the founder and president of Camouflage Kids, a non-profit organization that provides a college athletic game-day experience focusing on the children of military personnel deployed overseas.

"FOR THE longest time, I thought basketball was what my life would defined as," said Nix. "It was my occupation, one that I loved.

"Now I see there is so much more that I can do for people.

"I think we all go through life looking for a way to be remembered," he said. "Today, I want to be remembered as somebody who made a difference.

"I'm going to be 50 in September. I've reached the point in my life where I just want to give something back, something that was important to me.

"I remember as a little boy how my parents were always there for me," he said. "Where ever we played a game, they were there. When I reflect back on those memories, I now know how important that was.

"I remember as a little boy how my parents were always there for me," he said. "Where ever we played a game, they were there. When I reflect back on those memories, I now know how important that was.

"And kids who have parents serving this country overseas don't have that opportunity."

That's where Camouflage Kids comes in.

Nix's organization arranges it so that the children of men and women serving our country get the opportunity to attend a college game, basketball or football.

"There are a lot of kids whose parents have returned from active duty," said Nix. "These kids and their families can't afford to go to a game.

"The average cost today for a college basketball game is about \$30 and that's just for one person.

"We arrange it for the kids to take a tour of the campus where the game is being played. We give each of them a T-shirt and a knapsack along with a wristband with a phone number on it in case they get lost. And we give them each \$10 to spend on food at the game."

"If we can get one or two kids to go back home and say to somebody, 'I want to work harder in school so that I can go to college, that makes it all worth while,'" Nix said.

The University at Buffalo will host Army on Saturday, October 18, and Nix is hoping that his organization can arrange to have kids attend the contest.

"We started out by sending kids to games at the military academies ... the Air Force Academy, West Point and Annapolis," said Nix. "Last year, we sent kids to game at 20 schools and we'd love to add UB to that roster.

"It's a great tie to Western New York where I grew up."

Nix recently returned from Iraq where he, along with five other college and pro basketball coaches, took part in a USO tour.

It gave him the opportunity to meet some of the parents whose children his program benefits.

"BEFORE we left, we visited Walter Reed Hospital in Washington," said Nix. "I met one father of a kid who we had sent to a game last year and he told me how much it meant that somebody back home cared enough to reach out to his son.

"I knew at that moment that this would be an emotional trip for me."

And it was.

"If they had told me that the flight home was canceled and we had to stay an extra three weeks, I wouldn't have minded a bit," said Nix. "The troops that are serving over there don't think too highly of the media in this country right now because all we're seeing on the news every day is what the troops call isolated instances of the bad things.

"They told all of us that it was an honor for them to be there and that, despite popular belief, we are doing a good job."

"That made me realize how much more my program means than I originally thought," said Nix. "Last year, we had a huge fundraiser and did extremely well.

"That was in June. Some time in October, I received a check from a lady for \$10. She apologized for sending it in so late and said that it was all she could afford.

"I called her immediately to thank her because her donation, regardless of how small, meant so much to a kid."

This year's Camouflage Kids fundraiser is scheduled for September and Nix claims Bobby Knight will be among the coaches in attendance this time around.

To find out how you can donate, go to [www.camokids.org](http://www.camokids.org)

(Jim Melaro is a sports writer for the Olean Times Herald.)