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## Washington County women head effort to help military personnel



Mary Barbara Dagliano, left, and Melissa Barrett Morrow knit woolen helmet liners for military personnel serving in Iraq. Y2Knit in Funkstown is coordinating the knitting of the liners. **(Photo credit: By Ric Dugan / Staff Photographer)**

### Knitted helmet liners to help keep service members warm

By MARLO BARNHART [marlob@herald-mail.com](mailto:marlob@herald-mail.com)

#### Knitted helmet liners to help keep soldiers warm

HALFWAY - Just back from a tour of duty in Korea, Melissa Barrett Morrow knows all too well how cold it can get in today's war zones.

"In Korea, it is either winter or summer - there is no spring or fall," the Williamsport High School and U.S. Military Academy graduate said.

With little or no protection between a military helmet and the wearer's head, discomfort often mounts as the temperature drops, Morrow said.

Armed with a desire to help solve that problem and a newly acquired ability to knit, Morrow has set out to create her own and draft others to

help her knit woolen helmet liners for military personnel in Korea, Iraq, Afghanistan and Kosovo.

Recently discharged as a captain after 6 1/2 years in the U.S. Army, Morrow, 28, is briefly living with her parents in Halfway while waiting for her husband, John, to finish his tour of duty in Iraq.

"John said it was 50 degrees in Iraq and he was very cold," Morrow said Monday after speaking with him.

A neighbor, Mary Barbara Dagliano, has taught Morrow to knit to help pass the time and reduce her anxiety. Both women are working on helmet liners.

"My mother-in-law in Jamestown, N.Y., is also knitting liners," Morrow said.

An accomplished knitter can finish a liner in a couple of days.

"It takes me about a week, but I'm getting faster," Morrow said.

In what she describes as a holding pattern until she is reunited with her husband, Morrow said she has been helping out with the Grace Academy volleyball team.

"I expect John back some time in January for a leave, and he will take back the liners that are completed," Morrow said.

After a few more months of duty, John Morrow is planning to return to the United States, complete graduate school and begin teaching at West Point.

Y2Knit in Funkstown is coordinating the knitting of helmet liners that will go to Iraq with John Morrow when he returns to duty.

The helmet liners must be 100 percent wool, which is warmer, wicks better and is less dangerous than acrylic in the event of fire exposure, said Susan Wolcott of Y2Knit.

Riding in open trucks and Humvees, military personnel often encounter sub-zero wind chills. The military headgear issued to the troops is made of synthetic material, which is not as warm as wool.

The wool head covering can be worn under the Kevlar helmet to provide warmth to the head and neck, but it does not restrict vision.

About 30 percent of a person's body heat loss is through the head, studies show. It is important to keep the head warm so the body temperature stays up. The brain controls everything else in the body, the ability to think and act, as well as the ability for the body to maintain a particular temperature.

The patterns for knitted or crocheted helmet liners and the wool are available at [www.y2knit.net/helmetliners.htm](http://www.y2knit.net/helmetliners.htm) or by calling Y2Knit in Funkstown at 301-766-4543.