

## Failure not an option for Poiner

By EMILY ANDERSON  
*Special to The Press*

An Army commercial plays at Andi Poiner's childhood home in Ohio: "Be all that you can be in the Army."

She has never considered joining the military. The very next day she meets with a recruiter. With the support of her father, she leaves her hometown to join the army. Awake at night in basic training she wonders if she has made the right choice.

The cards fall into place as she completes air assault school in Fort Richardson, Ark. She graduates from rappel master course in Washington, D.C., and is later asked to teach this very course.

Two out of four women graduate from air assault course. Andi is one of them. In 2008 she is deployed with the military police in Camp Bucca, Iraq. She is stationed there for a year. It is her duty to keep Sunnis and Shi'ites separate.

While stationed in Alaska, Poiner meets her first husband and has a son, Sean. At the age of 24 he dies of colon cancer, leaving her with an 18-month-old baby.

His sudden and unexpected death contributes to her decision to attend mortuary school in Nashville later in life. She is determined to make something positive out of the negative.

Andi retires as first sergeant in 2013. This is an honor realized by few, but she never sees herself as a female groundbreaker. In her mind, she is simply following her passion. She doesn't do this to be a trailblazer. For her, failure is not an option.

She takes a break from the Army in order to get a degree in mortuary science at John A. Gupton in Nashville. She is currently the funeral director/embalmer at Brummitt McKenzie Funeral Home and Curry Fu-



POINER

neral Home in Dyersburg.

She remembers a quote from a book; people often ask, "How can you do what you do?" To this she replies "I love my job."

Embalming, she says is just "one piece of the puzzle."

There is a time frame of 48 to 72 hours to call the minister, order a casket, coordinate with the cemetery and get an obituary, and there is only one chance to get it right.

She receives satisfaction in making the deceased look good again. "I'm there to make them look good so the families have a good memory," she says. Her son Sean is considering following in her footsteps.

As an animal advocate, Poiner transports dogs and cats as far as Nashville and Memphis in the next leg of their journey to their forever homes. She is also an active member of St. Jude Catholic Church.

## FREE VEIN SCREENING

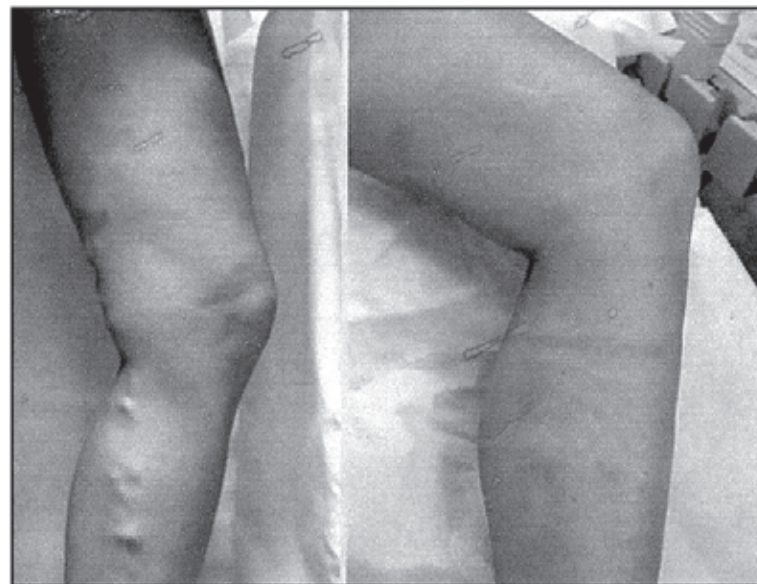
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