

Sports

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PHOTOS BY SPC. BROOKS FLETCHER

As the sun sets over the mountains in El Paso, runners catch a brief draft of wind as they make the turn at the Stout Track and Field.

Bliss Soldiers compete during post track championship

SGT. LAKEISHA BACKUS

3rd Bn., 2nd ADA

Soldiers competed in the 2006 Fort Bliss Intramural Track Post Championships held at Stout Track and Field April 25 through 27.

Soldiers from the 108th, 6th, 11th, and, 31st ADA brigades, and the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division participated in the championship to be deemed as the best runners at Fort Bliss. Units competed for Commander's Cup points, which would be added to the points given for the other sporting events that were held. A track team trophy was also awarded to the division for their overall track and field performance. From the enlisted Soldiers to officers, many runners were prepared as they trained prior to the event and were ready to run. David Dumas of F Company, 1st Battalion, 44th Air Missile Defense, asserted that he dedicated time away from his normal duties, to brush up on his running techniques. The competition, which has been held in early spring for the last nine years, consisted of numerous running events -- ranging from the 100-meter dash, to the 1500-meter run.

Joe Fedak, Fort Bliss intramural sports coordinator, said he would like to incorporate more events, particularly field events, but due to the lack of equipment to facilitate this, it is not possible.

Day one of the competition brought preliminary trials for the sprinting event, as well as the finals for the 1500. Out of the more than 30 participants competing in the men's 100, one third advanced to semi-

final action. In the 1500, Stephanie Bunker of Echo Battery, 1st Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery, 108th Brigade, took a commanding lead and secured the victory with a time of 6 minutes and 8 seconds. After winning the post 1500 earlier this month, Bunker was asked to compete in the championships by her chain of command. With the competitive tone set by the 100 and the triumphant victory by Bunker, day one set the tone for the championship. Day two began promising for Jason Morales of 31st Combat Support Hospital. Morales stole the show as he became a dual winner, winning both the 5,000-meter run and the 400-meter dash, which were back-to-back events.

Morales, who is not foreign to track and field, was able to relive his high school and college years. "Coming out to doing this activity is great. I do this because I enjoy it," said Morales. The 100 continued, reducing the field to the eight fastest runners to compete in the finals. The day was concluded with the semi-finals of the 800-meter run. Norriel Fahie from C Company, 1st Battalion, and 44th Air Missile Defense, was among the competitors who ran in that event. "It's challenging as you get older to perform," stated the 40-year-old senior noncommissioned officer, "but I want to support my unit."

The final day started off with the 100. Spectators gathered along the track gate to witness the finals. Marquee Coffee of C Company, 2nd Battalion, 43rd ADA Bde., took the photo finish win, running a swift time of 10.611 seconds. Coffee, a three-time winner of this event, posted the fastest 100-meter



Ali Musheera strides through the half-way point of the women's 200 meter finals at the Fort Bliss Intramural Track Championship held at Stout track April 25 through 27.

dash time ever ran on a Fort Bliss track. "I love the sport and [love] to compete", stated Coffee. Coffee also won the 200 later that afternoon. The last event left dust on the track, as Ameni Suttice of 3rd Battalion, 43rd ADA Bde. came back from behind to help her team win the 400-meter relay. Suttice also took gold medals in the 100 and 200 respectively. "I like to run track ... every year I come out to win," said Suttice.

As the championship competition was coming to an end, the bragging rights of the unit were now a reality because the team points were tallied and 108th ADA Bde. was awarded the Track and Field Championship team trophy, proving for 2006, 108th possesses the best runners on Fort Bliss.



Lynda Jean reaches anxiously for the baton during a handoff from Julianna Eum.

Race, fun run/walk kicks off Armed Forces Day celebration

The American Red Cross and Team Bliss announce the Wells Fargo Race for the Red May 20 on Fort Bliss to benefit the local Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services program. The featured race is a competitive 5K co-ed run with winners in eight age categories, from children to seniors 70 years and up. There is also a 5K fun run/walk and a 1 mile fun run/walk. All races begin at the corner of Sheridan and Pleasonton and will follow routes beside historic Fort Bliss buildings before ending near the parade grounds.

Day of the race registration will open at 6:45 a.m., followed by a 7:30 a.m. opening ceremony and warm up. The competitive race will begin at 7:45 a.m., followed by the 5K fun run/walk and the 1 mile fun run/walk. Winners in the eight age categories will be announced during an award ceremony at 9 a.m. Many other activities are planned throughout the day in honor of Armed Forces Day, including aerial flyovers and skydivers at 10 a.m., health and tourism fairs, rappelling, and military equipment displays, and the annual Sergeants Major Association chili cook-off.

Race entry is only \$10 if received by May 15 (\$15 after May 15) and includes a T-shirt. Water, snacks and other treats will be served after the race. Entry forms can be picked up at the Fort Bliss Station, 45 Slater Road, or at the Red Cross Chapter, 3620 Admiral Street. Interested participants can also call the chapter at 592-0208 or download a form at www.redcrosselpaso.org. The first 300 active duty entrants will run free. Participants of all ages are welcome (no pets). Expedited access to the post and special parking will be provided for race participants who show their race bib at the gate.

The Race for the Red is part of Freedom Fiesta, which runs from May 13 to June 18.

Armed Forces Emergency Services is a Red Cross service mandated by Congress that provides emergency messaging between military families and military personnel serving away from home. The Fort Bliss Station of the American Red Cross handles between 3,000 and 4,000 emergency messages each year, and this number is growing rapidly as Fort Bliss grows and assumes new missions.