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Soldier qualifies for Boston Marathon

Nancy Gould
Hunter Public Affairs

She describes running as her core, her niche in life, the thing that gives her life order and keeps her grounded.

In March, running reaped additional rewards for Sgt. 1st Class Couretta Sirmans, a 41-year-old Soldier and athlete with the 224 Military Intelligence Battalion at Hunter Army Airfield. After only three months of training for the 2011 Boston Marathon's qualifying run March in Atlanta, Sgt. 1st Class Sirmans placed 14th overall among women competitors, running the marathon in three hours, 28 minutes and 55 seconds. She placed 150th overall among the 2,114 men and women who competed. In addition to the 2011 Marathon, her time also qualifies her to run in the 2012 Boston Marathon.

The marathon was a bittersweet victory for Sgt. 1st Class Sirmans, since it was also in March that her 18-year marriage finally ended. When she returned from Iraq last November, she pushed her way through the initial pain of her failing marriage by running. After a year-long respite in the desert from the sport, she can now pour her time, energy and heart into getting her body ready to compete.

"It's my drug of choice," said Sgt. 1st Class Sirmans. "Long runs help me focus on personal and work-related issues. I use that time to identify my problems and work out solutions."

"Divorce is like dying," she continued, adding that running gives her confidence, strength and the determination to press forward to her new goals on the horizon — a degree in human resources, promotion in the Army, and qualifying for the Olympic trials as a "master" competitor.

"I'm a strong person," said Sgt. 1st Class Sirmans, the 12th child of 12, seven girls and five boys, who

learned life lessons from a loving family. Shortly before her deployment to Iraq, she experienced another devastating blow — the death of her mother, with whom she was intensely close.

"I'm the mirror image of my mother — I'm an introvert, quiet but independent; a 'silent storm' as we used to say of my mother. Lately, Sgt. 1st Class Sirmans' description of herself has broadened. The pain of divorce has caused positive life changes.

"I'm becoming more open, more grounded, and I think I've begun to blossom, thanks to the support from friends and my chain of command," she said.

That chain of command includes 1st Sgt. Claudine AltVater, 224 Military Intelligence Battalion, who allows Sirmans the time to train.

Another supporter is Command Sergeant Major Stephen Dant, 224 Military Intelligence Battalion's command sergeant major.

"Sergeant First Class Sirmans is an extraordinary Soldier and athlete who gives 100 percent in whatever challenge she takes on," he said. "She is a two-time member of the Fort Stewart-Hunter team competing in the Army 10-miler, as well as various other races. This last performance at the ING Marathon in Atlanta definitely showed her dedication and ability — earning her a spot in the coveted Boston Marathon. I expect her to compete successfully in that race and I fully believe that she can win her age division in 2011."

Sergeant First Class Sirmans will continue her present regiment of running 30 miles weekly and a diet of carbohydrates for energy to prepare for the upcoming Army 10-Miler and Boston Marathon.

She said running remains a life motivator, but it's her faith in God that will carry her through unforeseen trials to the end of life's journey.

"I'll be fine," she said. "I only have to make sure my priorities are in place — He'll do the rest."



Courtesy Photo

Sergeant First Class Couretta Sirmans, a Soldier with the 224th MI Bn. at Hunter Army Airfield, finished with a time of 3:28:55 at the Atlanta Marathon last month, a time that qualified her for the Boston Marathon, which will take place April 19.

First Stewart Bass Tournament held at Pineview Lake

Bob Mathews
DFMWR Marketing Publicity Specialist
Randy Murray
Fort Stewart Public Affairs

Fort Stewart's Pond 1, better known as Pineview Lake, was the site of the first Fort Stewart Bass Tournament, April 10. According to Susan Chipple, director of Outdoor Recreation, 34 fishermen registered for the event; five of them were youths.

One of the young anglers, Jordan Butler, 9, son of Chief Warrant Officer Thomas Butler, did all his fishing from the bank. He took 3rd place in the youth category with a bass weighing in at .98 pounds.

"We enjoy tournaments such as this," said his mom, Kaesy Butler. She said the whole family, including Jordan and brother Dru, 10, enjoy fishing and other outdoor activities. Mom

and the boys arrived at 5:30 a.m. in order to be ready to fish at first light. Chief Warrant Officer Butler is currently deployed with the 1/9th Field Artillery.

"This was a great opportunity for anglers to enjoy the abundant natural resources that Fort Stewart has to offer," said Chipple. "The tournament was the result of efforts to expand outdoor recreation fishing programs."

Chippelle said other fishing events planned in the near future include the Single Soldier Recreation Day at Holbrook Pond, May 13, and the annual Kids Fishing Derby at Pond 30, June 12.

Results

The names of the winners, the weight of the winning bass and their prize for this year's tournament included the following:

Youth
1st place — Blake Cosner
1.59 lbs rod & reel

2nd place — Courtney Welch
1.42 lbs cap and T-shirt

3rd place — Jordan Butler
.98 lbs cap

Adults
1st place — Richard Kunda
1.57 lbs \$100

2nd place — Timothy Seiler
1.55 lbs \$75

3rd place — Donnie Daugherty
1.43 lbs \$50

Soldier
Sgt. Paul McCann
1.43 lbs \$200



Bob Mathews

Dan Meacham (left) of Black Creek, Ga., and Walt "Butch" Hicks of Statesboro were among those who launched boats to fish in the Bass Tournament at Fort Stewart's Pond 1, April 10.

Fitness classes part of routine for Soldiers at COB Speicher

Spc. Jessica Rohr
TF Marne Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq - The Morale, Welfare and Recreation gyms have more than just free-weights and treadmills to offer. There are a variety of fitness classes that can help improve cardio, stimulate weight loss and build muscle.

Spinning, step aerobics and boxing



are a few of the current fitness classes offered at different gyms on Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.

Spin class is an hour of cardiovascular training consisting of sound principles, coaching and motivational music. The class improves cardiovascular endurance, which according to Capt. Melissa "M.J." Johnson, an operations intelligence officer for the 3rd Infantry Division, offers benefits for running and core training.

"I have noticed an improvement in my abs and legs," said Pfc. Roxanne Geiler, an avid class rider and medic at the troop medical clinic, Company C, 701st Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

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Spc. Jessica Rohr

Task Force Marne Soldier, Pfc. Roxanne Geiler, a medic at the troop medical clinic, Company C, 701st Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, cycles up a sweat during an endurance spin class at the main gym on Contingency Operating Base Speicher, March 5.

Fight Night at FOB Warrior



Pfc. Jessica Luhrs

Sergeant Kito Queen, an Alexandria, La., native and a senior line medic with Fox Co. 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, punches his opponent Sgt. Micah Brown, a Decatur, Ga., native and paralegal with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division of Fort Bliss, Texas, during a boxing match on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Iraq, April 4. See story page 11B



Photos by Randy Murray

Families begin to gather early at the Youth Fishing Event at Fort Stewart's Pond 30, April 8. Not only were dads helping sons and daughters bait their hooks, cast their lines and remove catfish from their hooks, members of the Georgia Fish and Wildlife Department were on hand to help youngsters learn how to apply bait, cast lines and remove fish but most of all - how to catch the big ones.

Youth fishing event brings Families together

Randy Murray
Fort Stewart Public Affairs

A wise man once said you would be doing yourself a favor if you took a kid fishing. That's because a special joy fills the heart when you see a child hook a fish and watch him or her eagerly reel it in.

Several Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield parents and grandparents discovered this special joy during the Youth Fishing Event at Fort Stewart's Pond 30, April 8.

Moms, dads and granddads stood along the shore with excited boys and girls, helping bait their hooks with "nasty" chicken livers, cast their lines "way out there" and safely remove "slippery" catfish from their hooks once the young anglers got their fish to shore.

"I bait her hook for her and take the fish off the hook for her," said retired Soldier William Tully regarding his 7-year-old daughter, Laurin, who was keeping him busy doing one or the other. "She's having a good time; that's all the matters."

Retired Soldier-granddad Garry Lawson and Family Member Duane Malek shared similar stories as they assisted Alex Freeman, 11, and Josh Malek, 7, respectively.

Specialist Michael Peruciel went above and

beyond the call of daddy's duty while helping his son Jonathan, 7. After hooking a rather large catfish, Jonathan's line broke, but dad chased the line to the water's edge, grabbed it up and pulled in the fish with his bare hands.

After watching Dad be the hero, Justin Peruciel, 3, decided to assist his sister Joshelyn, 5, as she struggled to land the catfish she'd hooked. Rather than reel the fish all the way in, he and Joshelyn simply backed up, pulling the fish out of the water and up the bank, which wasn't that easy for little Justin, who tripped and fell, causing sis to have to then assist him.

According to Rachael Hallman, fishery biologist with Stewart-Hunter Fish and Wildlife, Pond 30 was stocked with more than 3,000 pounds of catfish for the event, which started at 8 a.m. and ended at 11 a.m. Although the fish were not weighed, it appeared the young fisherman caught quite a few of them, leaving a few for the adults who tried their luck at Pond 30 that afternoon or the next day.

More special events for youth and children are planned by the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation throughout the month of April, the Month of the Military Child.



Heaven-Lee Newcomer, 7, daughter of Family Member Kim Newcomer, poses with one of several catfish she caught during the FMWR-sponsored Youth Fishing Event, April 8.

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"Just go once and you'll fall in love with it," said Pfc. Geiler, one of the about 30 spin class students.

In addition to spinning, a step aerobics class is offered in the morning at the main gym.

Step aerobics is a high-energy workout, made up of footwork, resistance-band strength training and stability ball training, choreographed to energetic music meant to keep participants motivated. Taught by Lt. Col. Donna W. Martin, 3rd ID command inspector general, this class helps improve cardio endurance while toning abs, legs and arms.

Over 50 people participate in the class. Lieutenant Colonel Martin said command sergeants major and squad leaders bring their Soldiers to engage in some friendly competition. She pits the different units or squads against each other, which pushes them to work harder.

"The aerobic class is a morale booster," said Sgt. Gregory T. Cosby, Jr., truck commander with Troop R, 3rd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment. "It beats always doing the traditional two mile run, push-ups and sit-ups. It gives you something else to do and helps you meet new people. Plus, I am a beast on the track now!"

For those looking for a little more contact, boxing can offer a challenging, non-stop active workout.

Boxing takes a more instructional approach, where enthusiasts share their knowledge and techniques with one another. Boxing sessions include warm-up drills, and speed bag and punching bag work. For Soldiers looking for a full-body workout, boxing pushes cardiovascular training to the limits and endurance to the max.

"Don't be scared to try it out," said Jeffery J. Drew, a building technician with Kellogg, Brown and Root. "It's a

very (high) contact sport, but it's good training, a good learning process, self-defense, good composure and good exercise."

"It's another workout and gives me something different," said Staff Sgt. Keshon Henry, 1st Platoon sergeant of the Security Detachment, DSTB,

3rd ID. "If you are into an intense workout and want to learn boxing, come check it out."

A boxing, spinning or step aerobics class is offered each day of the week, and a schedule of class times is available at the north, south and main gyms.



Spc. Jessica Rohr

Sergeant Gregory T. Cosby, Jr., a truck commander with Troop R, 3rd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, exercises in the morning step aerobics class at the main gym on Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, March 6. Aerobics classes are held Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, at 6 a.m.

U.S. forces hold fight night in Iraq

Pfc. Jessica Luhrs
Task Force Marne Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, Iraq— Behind the stage, amateur boxers were taping their hands and warming up; out front a crowd of cheering Soldiers and Airmen were gathering around the stage where a U.S. Army DJ, known as DJ Swift, was getting the crowd pumped for the fight night.

This familiar bell sounded, and the crowd fell quiet as the first match began featuring two female Airmen stationed on Forward Operating Base Warrior.

After throwing dozens of punches, Airman 1st Class Yolanda Solido-Espinal, a native of El Paso, Texas, and an information management specialist with the 11th Apparitions Group of Washington, D.C., was named the champion.

After their fight, the men took the stage. This fight was possibly one of the more interesting for the amped up crowd.

The 208-pound Sgt. Micah Brown, a native of Decatur, Ga., and a paralegal with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, out of Fort Bliss, Texas, took on 280-pound Sgt. Kito Queen, an Alexandria, La., native and a senior line medic with Fox Co., 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

Both Soldiers put up a good fight for the crowd, but in the end, Sgt. Queen was named the champion. After this fight, the remainder of the fights pitted Army boxers against Airmen, with the Army winning three of the five fights.

"I think this is a good morale boost for the FOB," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Jerred S. Mitchell, a native of Thompson, Ohio, president of the E-5 and E-6 Club on FOB Warrior and project manager for the event. "These Soldiers and Airmen can come out here and get some stress out."



Sergeant Kevin Paulson, a noncommissioned officer with Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, of Fort Bliss, Texas, blocks a punch from his opponent, Airman 1st Class Parrish Rockwell-Jackson, a native of Colorado City, Colo., of the 506th Air Expeditionary Group, during a boxing match on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Iraq, April 4.



Photos by Pfc. Jessica Luhrs

Airman First Class Yolanda Solido-Espinal a native of El Paso, Texas, and a information management specialist with the 11th Apparitions Group, out of Boeing Air Force Base, Washington D.C., blocks a punch from her opponent, Air Force Staff Sgt. Yshanell Sanchez, a Miami, Fla., native and a supply sergeant with 506th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron, out of Hulbert Field, Fla., during a boxing match on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Iraq, April 4.

SPORTS & RECREATION BRIEFS

The CYSS Central Registration, building 443, Gulick Avenue is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., for sign-up. For additional information, call the Youth Sports Office at Jordan Youth Gym at 767-4371.

Register for Stewart Baseball, T-Ball

Baseball registration for CYSS youth will continue until April 30.

Evaluations for all age groups (except T-Ball) will be held May 1, beginning at 9 a.m. for 7-8 year-olds; 12 p.m. for 9-10 year-olds; and 2 p.m. for 11-13 year-olds. Age groups listed are tentative and may need to be adjusted depending on number of participants registered for each age group.

Register at Fort Stewart CYSS, building 443, Gulick Avenue. Hours of operation Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more registration regarding sports registration, please call 912-767-2312. For more information on baseball, please call 912-767-4371. Volunteers are urgently needed to coach teams. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer coach, please call the Youth Sports office at 912-767-4371.

For more information on sports available, please call Jordan Youth Gym Sports Office at 912-767-4371 or 912-767-9270.

NOTE: Current sports physical is required when registering for CYSS programs, and must not expire before the program ends.

Enjoy Moonlite Bowling at Stewart Lanes

Come out and enjoy late-night bowling at Stewart Lanes Bowling Center, building 450, when we are open until 2 a.m. The cost is just \$2.50 per game per person. Or, pay a flat fee of \$25 per person for unlimited bowling from 11 p.m. to 2 a.m. Shoe rental fee is \$1.75. Call 912-767-4273 for more information.