NEWS

Oregon National Guard marathon team shows top numbers again

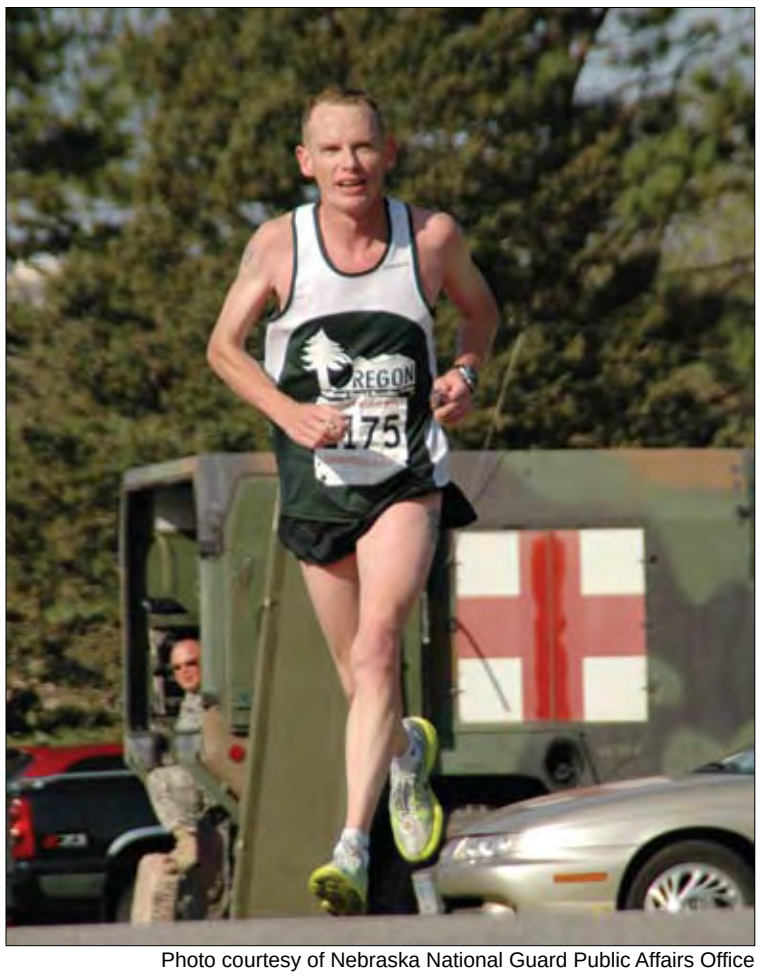

Photo courtesy of Nebraska National Guard Public Affairs Office

Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Vandervlugt passes an Army National Guard medic station on his way around the 26.2 mile marathon course in Lincoln, Neb. May 3. He finished the course in 2:47:19 and placed fourth overall with the best time for the Oregon National Guard Team.

Story by
Tech. Jefferson Thompson,
Oregon Military Department
Public Affairs Office

LINCOLN, Neb. -- The Oregon National Guard is once again sitting at the top of the National Guard running world.

Competing in the annual Lincoln/National Guard Marathon held May 3 in Lincoln, Neb., the Oregonians cruised through the 26.2 mile course under clear skies to win this year's team chase over the Utah National Guard Marathon Team by a margin of nearly 30 minutes.

Leading the way for Oregon was Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Vandervlugt, La Grande, Ore., 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Regiment, who finished fourth overall with a time of 2:47:19. He trimmed nearly three minutes from his fifth place finish last year and moved up a notch in the final standings. Also placing for the Oregon team were 1st Sgt. Seven Richmond, Albany, Ore., who finished the race in 2:49:02, and Capt. Sean Nixon, Sunriver, Ore., who finished the race in 2:55:51.

According to Oregon team captain, Vandervlugt, "I wanted to go out on top and finish well as an individual my last time out," he said. "My unit is scheduled to deploy and then I plan to retire after that." Vandervlugt has run this marathon 16 times during his career and has averages under 2:40 for all of them and has made the all-Guard team every year.

This year's National Guard Marathon team competition attracted 18 team entries from across the United States. The team match results are determined by combining the overall running times of the top three declared members of the team.

In winning the team race, the Oregon National Guard runners posted a combined time of 8:32:21, outdistancing Guard runners from Utah, who scored a combined time of 9:00:04 to take second place.

The Oregon Guard team consisted of Vandervlugt, Richmond, Nixon, Smith, and Edward King. Richmond was voted Guard Rookie of the Year by all team coordinators from the respective states as it was his first marathon.

Jeff Galloway, a former Olympian, author of books on running and the marathon's "guest instructor," told them each marathoner inspires 25 others to improve their physical fitness. Many of the participating Guard members said they wanted to inspire Soldiers and Airmen to be more physically fit, thereby preparing them for deployment.

Master Sgt. Bill Kaemmer, a member of the repeat champion Oregon National Guard Marathon team, said deployed soldiers face a lot of discomfort but the rigors of preparing for a marathon also help prepare them for war.

"You can't train for a marathon and not be uncomfortable," Kaemmer said.

Five members of the team earned spots on the elite All Guard Marathon Team which takes the top 40 male runners and the top 15 female runners. Those runners are Nixon, King, Vandervlugt, Richmond, and Smith. The team is expected to compete in five to eight marathons across the United States during the upcoming running season. The selectees will alternate events that they attend.

Master Sgt. Bill Kaemmer is the official team coordinator and would like any soldiers interested in running for the Oregon Guard Marathon Team to contact him at: (503) 725-3512 or vai e-mail at: kaemmerb@pdx.edu.

Innovative Readiness Team restores habitat

Photo by Spc. Catelyn Poli, Innovative Readiness Team

Spc. Eric Holloway of the 224th Engineer Company pushes sand up the beach using a Caterpillar D7 Bulldozer at the Oregon Dunes Innovative Readiness Training Project site Dec. 3.

This project was commissioned in order to remove non-native European Beach Grass planted 70 to 80 years ago to prevent sand from blowing over roads. Now this grass threatens protected Western Snowy Plover bird species habitat. The Innovative Training Program responded to the need and removed much of the grass, restoring the beach to its proper condition.

The IRT broke ground on another project in Independence, Ore., June 12.

Projects like this are designed to provide cities, towns, parks, schools, government agencies, and non-profit organizations a way to stretch their budgets and support their local National Guard units at the same time by allowing them to hone their skills in preparation for deployment.

Photo by Sgt. Eric Rutherford, Oregon Military Department

Snyder 'brings it' to soldier competition

Spc. Donald Snyder "low-crawls" under barbed wire during an obstacle course as part of the Region 6 Soldier of the Year Competition at Fort Lewis, Wash., May 16. Synder, of Richland, Wash., is a medic with 1st. Detachment, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd. Battalion, 116th Cavalry Regiment. The weekend long competition consisted of an appearance board, PT test, weapons qualification, land navigation and several other soldier skill events. Snyder placed fourth overall in the competition, and said that even though he didn't win, it was great to compete with the best soldiers the National Guard had to offer. Snyder was named Oregon's 2009 Soldier of the Year in February.