

Thursday, February 28, 2008

OU alumnus organizes Special Olympic Torch run in Iraq

By **Rebecca Wyatt Thomas**, OU Web Writer

Since 1968, the 728th Military Police (MP) Battalion annually participates in the Troy Barboza Special Olympics Torch Run in Hawaii. This year, the battalion is deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom but the members don't want to give up their annual event. OU alumnus and Second Lieutenant Jody Holeton, CAS '00, is helping to organize a 5k Special Olympic Torch Run on Contingency Operating Base Speicher, in Iraq.

More than 400 military, civilian and contract personnel in Iraq will participate in the Torch Run.

"The Torch Run will build morale of the 728th military police battalion and other soldiers participating, as well as raise money for the Special Olympics," Holeton said. "This Torch Run is something MPs always do and something they believe in. My group of MPs firmly believes in the Special Olympics message of giving."

Hawaii's participation in the Special Olympics Torch Run began in 1986, but the group actually lost \$200 on the event. Twenty offices carried the Flame of Hope from the state capitol to the State Summer Games. The shirts for the participants incorrectly spelled enforcement with an "I."

"Since then we have learned how to spell and succeeded in raising nearly a half-million dollars," Holeton said. "In 1987, the Torch Run was named after Troy Barboza, who was killed in the line of duty. Troy was a dedicated coach for the Special Olympics Hawaii who rarely missed a practice."

The event has grown and now more than 2,500 law enforcement officials from federal, military, state, county and local agencies participate in the Torch Run.

Holeton is trying to recruit as many participants as possible for the event on March 15. Participants have the opportunity to earn prizes while raising money for the Special Olympics.

For more information, contact Holeton at jody.holeton@irq.centcom.mil.



Members of the 728th Military Police Battalion are currently stationed in Iraq, but that won't stop the group from participating the annual Special Olympics Torch Run.

SUMMARY

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Created by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Thursday, February 28, 2008
Modified by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Thursday, February 28, 2008
Article Start Date: Thursday, February 28, 2008