



NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD

NEWS RELEASE

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GUARD RUNNERS TACKLE LINCOLN NATIONAL GUARD MARATHON, FEMALE COMPETITOR MAKES HISTORY

**Released by
Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**By Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton
Nebraska National Guard Public Affairs**

LINCOLN, Neb. (May 3, 2015) – The third time was the charm for a pair of National Guard distance runners competing at this morning’s 38th annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon.

First Lieutenant Kenneth Rayner, a platoon leader with the Massachusetts Army National Guard, held true to the superstition when he sprinted under the finish line arch at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s Memorial Stadium in an official time of 2 hours, 37 minutes 9 seconds. This marked Rayner’s first championship after finishing in the Guard’s runner-up position the past two years.

“I’m happy to finish first this year,” said Rayner who completed the 26.2-mile course three minutes ahead of his time last year. “I am still a bit tired from the Boston Marathon two weeks ago, and the heat was a bit of a challenge, but I felt good overall. Right now, I want to find my other teammate and have a little fun tonight.” That fun, however, will be short-lived as Rayner said he graduates with a master’s degree in international affairs next week and still has a final exam to prepare for.

Placing second in the National Guard men’s category was Sgt. Javier Torres Rolon, a medic in the Puerto Rico Army National Guard, who finished with a time of 2:49:43.

The number three was also on the mind of this year’s top woman Guard runner. However in this case, it was about completing a rare three-peat. Staff Sgt. Emily Shertzer, an oboist with the Pennsylvania Air National Guard’s 553rd Band of the Mid-Atlantic, earned her third consecutive Guard woman title while sprinting across the finish line in an official time of 2 hours, 55 minutes, 56 seconds.

Shertzer maintained a comfortable lead over Maj. Varinka Ensminger, a medical services officer with the Kentucky Army National Guard, who placed second in the National Guard woman’s category with a time of 3:11:33.

“I feel really good all things considered,” said Shertzer. “It’s definitely a lot warmer than we are used to and a bit breezy, but I tried to go out conservatively and I ran with a good group of guys the first half. We slowed a bit on the out, but once we hit the turn around and got the

wind at our back it felt a lot better. My time was five minutes slower than last year, but I expected that based on a lack of training.”

Shertzer said she hurt her sciatic nerve during a marathon in October and only started running again in January.

This year’s Lincoln National Guard Marathon attracted nearly 13,500 athletes. Among these runners were approximately 185 of the Army and Air National Guard’s top distance runners representing 42 states and two U.S. territories who took to the Lincoln pavement to compete for positions on the National Guard’s “All Guard” Marathon Team and a chance for their state to steal the traveling trophy from the defending national champion Pennsylvania National Guard marathon team.

Washington took possession of The Cobb traveling trophy for earning the best overall time of their top three runners.

“I was concerned about the heat conditions,” said Sgt. 1st Class Christine Raftery, National Guard Bureau Marathon Coordinator. “It was a rough day for people to try and PR and a good day for the athletes to just enjoy the race and take it easy.”

The Lincoln National Guard Marathon continues to demonstrate the synergy between the community and the Guard about fitness,” said Maj. Gen. Daryl L. Bohac, Adjutant General of the Nebraska National Guard. “It keeps us in front of the community where we need to be.”

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Photos Captions

20150503-Z-ZO109-130

First Lieutenant Kenneth Rayner, a platoon leader with the Massachusetts Army National Guard, runs in the 38th annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon in Lincoln, Neb., May 3. Rayner led the way for all National Guard runners and finished second place overall with his time of 2 hours, 37 minutes and 9 seconds. (Nebraska Air National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon/released)

20150503-Z-ZO109-477

First Lieutenant Kenneth Rayner, a platoon leader with the Massachusetts Army National Guard, completes the final steps of the 38th annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon in Lincoln, Neb., May 3. Rayner led the way for all National Guard runners and finished second place overall with his time of 2 hours, 37 minutes and 9 seconds. (Nebraska Air National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon/released)

20150503-Z-ZO109-505

Staff Sgt. Emily Shertzer, an oboist with the Pennsylvania Air National Guard’s 553rd Band of the Mid-Atlantic, completes the final steps of the 38th annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon in Lincoln, Neb., May 3. Shertzer, who was the top female finisher in last year’s marathon, once again led the way for all National Guard females and finished third place overall with her time of

2 hours, 55 minutes and 16 seconds. (Nebraska Air National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon/released)

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Staff Sgt. Emily Shertzer, an oboist with the Pennsylvania Air National Guard's 553rd Band of the Mid-Atlantic, runs in the 38th annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon in Lincoln, Neb., May 3. Shertzer, who was the top female finisher in last year's marathon, once again led the way for all National Guard females and finished third place overall with her time of 2 hours, 55 minutes and 16 seconds. (Nebraska Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Thach/released)