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Deployed troops hold Susan G. Komen shadow run

By Capt. Aaron M. Testa
16th Engineer Brigade Public Affairs

BAGHDAD—Although 2010 marks the 17th year of the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure in Columbus, Ohio, it is the first time that Columbus will have a shadow race in Baghdad.

A group of Ohio National Guard Soldiers from the Columbus-based 16th Engineer Brigade who are committed to the cause is busy planning a Susan G. Komen shadow run, scheduled for May 15 at Camp Liberty.

“We contacted the Komen team in Columbus and they were delighted to work with us to sponsor the 5k run,” said Lt. Col. Jane Lengel, of the 16th Engineer Brigade and chairperson for the Baghdad event’s planning committee.

The committee has coordinated race T-shirts, bibs, online registration and donation as well as marketing materials to help spread the word.

“It’s been a great partnership and we are excited to have this opportunity to support the cause with our friends and family back home,” Lengel said.

The shadow race in Baghdad is being conducted in special honor of Stefanie Spielman, from Columbus, Ohio, who lost her battle with cancer late last year, Lengel said.

“I was inspired by the tremendous impact that Stefanie Spielman made in her fight against breast cancer and decided to take action to support the Race for the Cure,” Lengel said.

Lengel said she remembers feeling devastated for the family of Stefanie Spielman, who left behind children of similar age as her own.

“Breast cancer affects so many families and anything we can do here to raise awareness and funds to find a cure will be very worthwhile,” Lengel said.

Staff Sgt. Shari Camper, also of the 16th, is on the race planning committee and hopes the event will help raise awareness of the seriousness of the disease.

The cause is particularly significant for Brigade Commander Brig. Gen. Glenn C. Hammond, III, who lost his own mother to breast cancer.

“I have a special place in my heart for people who have lost loved ones to this relentless disease,” Hammond said. “So many emotions return when I relive those months of anguish.”

Lengel said the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure in Baghdad is expected to be one of the largest runs ever sponsored on Camp Liberty, drawing upwards of 1,500 runners from the Victory Base Complex area.

“The success of the run would not be possible without the support of the Camp Liberty Morale, Welfare and Recreation, the USO and, of course, the great support from friends and family back home,” Lengel said.

The run allows friends and family back home to log on to the Susan G. Komen web site and sponsor the group that will be running in Baghdad. The runners can also log on and donate.

“It is really good that Soldiers who are deployed have an opportunity to donate to the cause,” Camper said.

“There has been such a long, hopeful and oftentimes desperate line awaiting a significant breakthrough in the treatment, cure and prevention of breast cancer,” Hammond said. “Anything we can do to contribute to this cause, is certainly a step in the right direction. Clearly our engineer motto of ‘ESSAYONS, Let Us Try’ is quite appropriate.”

For more information log on to www.komencolumbus.org. To donate on behalf of Baghdad 16th Engineers, click https://secure.info-komen.org/site/Donation2?idb=1420536485&df_id=5021&FR_ID=1644&PROXY_ID=130479&PROXY_TYPE=22&5021.donation=form1.

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