

### Close finishes highlight American Heroes event



Michael Bershears, center, a former runner at Missouri State and Oklahoma State won the American Heroes 10K on Saturday May 23. Runner-up was Kiplimo Chemirmir, left, who won a sprint to the finish against Jose Lopez, right. Bershears said he has moved to Dallas and is back competing after recovering from an injury. Photo submitted by Jose Lopez.



Members of the 1st Medical Brigade at Fort Hood and families.



Molly Tucker and Katherine Devlin



Molly Tucker, right, holds off Katherine Devlin to win the women's title. Photo submitted by John Tucker.



The third annual American Heroes 5K, 10K in Arlington attracted approximately 1,200 participants Saturday morning (May 23), and they enjoyed an overcast day that kept the temperature relatively mild, but the low ceiling prevented a helicopter flyover. Yet, there were several tributes and groups from various branches of the services, including Fort Hood, near Killeen. Many of the Fort Hood group have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan two or three times and some are to be soon deployed again, said Command Sgt. Major Kevin Stuart of the 1st Medical Brigade.



Command Sgt. Major Kevin Stuart

“We truly appreciate the support of all the folks from Arlington,” said Stuart, who has been in the service for 28 years and has seen most of the world. He was grateful that the brigade was part of the event. “It provides an opportunity for us to come out here and have some fun and wind down. Some are doing the 10K and some the 5K. The fact that we run three to five times a week, we call that training.”

Stuart also appreciates the freedoms we enjoy. “It’s an honor for us to serve our country. The freedoms we have today is due to our soldiers, sailors and Marines.... If you’ve been to other countries, you’d know exactly what I mean. We’re blessed...and this is the way I’d go to serve a great country like the United States of America.”

The 5K was highlighted by a close women's finish with 12-year-old Molly Tucker of Southlake barely holding off Texas A&M freshman Katherine Devlin, 19. Tucker finished in 19:26.4 and Devlin in 19:27.2. The men's 5K winner, Matt Pulle of Dallas, pulled away early and had no one pushing him to the finish as he won in 16:34.4. In the 10K, Michael Breshears won in 33:43.2 but without much fanfare as spectators were focusing on the duel between Kiplimo Chemirmir and Jose Lopez (pictured racing down the stretch). Many believed they were battling for the men's title. However, Chemirmir and Lopez knew they were battling for second. “I didn’t know the guy, but he stayed about 20 seconds ahead of us for a long time,” Lopez said. Breshears had finished among a group of 5K finishers and went virtually unnoticed. Taking the women's title was Haley Cruz of Cedar Hill in 38:45.2. Chemirmir, visiting from Austin, sprinted to the finish to nose out Lopez of Dallas by a second. Lopez had caught Kip by mile 5 and was trying to pull ahead with about 400 meters to go, “because I know Kip has a good kick.” Lopez, however, couldn't put enough distance between them and it was that “kick” that moved Kip in front at the finish line. Devlin also tried to play catch-up in the women's 5K, but Tucker, who has won several overall titles since she was 10, found another gear to win in official 19:24.4.

The event paid tribute to U.S. service personnel and vets. Tucker said she was running for her brother Joshua, who's in the Army. He's in Italy, but is soon to be deployed to Afghanistan.

Jonathan Merchant started the race by taking off about 30 seconds ahead in his racing wheelchair. He finished the 10K in 50:09.3.