



## **13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary)**

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# **Running for miles and miles**

13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Public Affairs

**CAMP LIBERTY**, Iraq – What started out as two soldiers running the Z-Lake located in Camp Liberty, Iraq to stay conditioned has transformed into a “Finance Running Team.” It has become more than just running to stay conditioned; it has evolved into a running fixation for ten soldiers and counting in the detachment.

Sgt. 1st Class Helga Colbert, the 828th detachment sergeant who hails from Eorado, Puerto Rico and Spc. Nicole Delong, a customer service clerk who resides in Reading, Pa., are credited for formulating the team atmosphere. Since coming to Iraq five months ago, Colbert and Delong have run in every sponsored running event; from the Army Ten Miler and ½ marathons, to running a staggering 30 miles in a little over three hours. These soldiers don’t just run for fun, they run for the adrenaline rush, and of course the t-shirts.

One of Delong’s leaders was able to catch up with her in between her switching from running shoes to her working desert boots, and asked her, why she enjoys running so much and she responded with, “Not only is running great

for me, but these races are motivating; the t-shirts are a memory and improving my time on each race is not only a challenge but an accomplishment!”

From the abundance of certificates of achievement, medals, plaques, t-shirts and coins, it is easy to determine that of the 20 events they have entered, Sgt. 1st Class Colbert has finished an astounding third or higher of competing females in every one of the running events and Spc. Delong consistently finishes high enough to earn a t-shirt.

Other soldiers in the detachment have contracted the running epidemic like a contagious virus; only this virus is actually good for you. The following soldiers have all come together to create the 828th FMD Finance Running Team; 1st Lt. Donald Warren, the company disbursing agent from Erie, Pa., Spc. Laura Zerphey, a finance cashier of Palmyra, Pa., Spc. Duriel Ford, a special actions technician, and a Pensacola, Fla. native, Spc. Eric Nelson, a finance cashier from Ephrata, Pa., Spc. Christopher Cuomo, another finance cashier of Harrisburg, Pa., Spc. Catherine Gil, a processing clerk from Lebanon, Pa., Spc. David Ramirez, an Eagle Cash Card technician and Sgt. Justin Stamm, a financial certifier both from Lebanon, Pa. Spc. Zerphey said she joined the running team because, “I started running in the events to better myself as a runner for not only short distances, but for long distances as well. When I cross that finish line it gives me the confidence, and sense of achievement that I need to keep pushing myself to be greater than what I am.” Spc. Cuomo has stated, “I ran the first time just to prove to myself that I could; now I try to run longer marathons just to push myself and get in better shape.”

“From comments that I have gathered from the group, I have learned that running is not only healthy for the mind, body and soul; but it also promotes camaraderie between soldiers alike, where officers and enlisted, contractors and DoD civilians can all come together on a common ground “running;” and the person who comes out on top is the one with the most heart rather than the one with the highest pay grade,” said Spc. Nelson.



**CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq** – Sgt. 1st Class Helga Colbert, a native of Eorado, Puerto Rico, and the detachment sergeant and Spc. Nicole Delong, a customer service clerk, from Reading, Pa., the originators of the “Finance Run Team” from the 828th Financial Management Detachment, 208th FM Co., 96th Special Troops Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, pose for a picture after completing the Army half marathon, which is just a little over 13 miles.



**CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq** – Sgt. 1st Class Helga Colbert, the detachment sergeant for the 828th Financial Management Detachment, 96th Special Troops Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade and a native of Eorado, PR, competes in the “Bobby Crim” 10 Miler. Colbert completed the ten miles in 1 hour, 10 minutes, 14 seconds, finishing third place among all the females competing.

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