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Public Affairs Office**

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Q-West Soldiers compete in triathlon

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CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq — As the sun began to rise in the northern Iraqi sky, Capt. Peter Lewis, commander, Bravo Co, 1-184 Infantry, 30th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, briefed a group of Soldiers here June 28. The brief was not of routes or precise military maneuvers, it was a briefing concerning the first triathlon to be held in northern Iraq.

The Bushmaster's Triathlon consisted of a 400-meter swim, an 11-kilometer bicycle course, and a three-kilometer run. It was the culmination of over 25 hours of planning and rehearsals with over 40 Soldiers involved with operating various parts of the triathlon.

The event coordinators, Lewis and Sgt. 1st Class Eric Hernandez, Bravo Co., watched as 55 competitors from the Army and Air Force, along with civilian contractors formed lines to start the first leg of the triathlon, the 400-meter swim.

Soldiers were able to compete as individuals or as teams. For many who participated, there was a great sense of pride and accomplishment for their efforts.

“This is something cool, a good memory,” said Maj. Darrin Bender, Task Force Speicher. “It was painful most of the race — you are in the red zone the whole time — but it was a lot of fun.”

1st Lt. Samantha Holys, 16th Special Troops Battalion, 16th Sust. Bde., was the first female to finish the race with a time of one hour and seven minutes. This wasn't her first triathlon. The Flagstaff, Ariz., native ran triathlons while she attended the University of Arizona.

“I’ve never done a triathlon with a tank rolling by, that was definitely a first,” said Holys. “The pool was fast, but what made the race challenging was the road and weather conditions.”

1st Lt. Marshall Kulp, 574th Quartermaster Co., 30th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sust. Bde, finished first in the men’s race with an overall time of 53 minutes and seven seconds.

Although there had been biathlons and fun runs, this was the first triathlon held at Q-West this summer.

“The military, by nature, is athletic,” said Lewis. “What better way to train than with a triathlon? The most enjoyable part is building a community. It started with 30 to 35 racers running biathlons and now we are well over 50.”

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Staff Sgt. Patricia McCarthy, badging non-commissioned officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 181st Brigade Support Battalion, and Olympia, Wash. native, rides past a M1A2 Abram tank during the Bushmaster’s Triathlon at Contingency Operation Base Q-West, Iraq, June 28. The race consisted of a 400-meter swim, an 11-kilometer bicycle event, and a three-kilometer run. (Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Adam V. Shaw)



1st Lt. Marshall Kulp, 574th Quartermaster Co., 30th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, blows away his competition at the Bushmaster's Triathlon at Contingency Operation Base Q-West, Iraq, June 28. Kulp finished with the fastest time of 53 minutes and seven seconds. The race consisted of a 400-meter swim, an 11-kilometer bicycle event, and a three-kilometer run.



1st Lt. Samantha Holys, 16th Special Troops Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, and 1st Lt. Marshall Kulp, 574th Quartermaster Co., 30th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sust. Bde, show off their respective first place trophy's after winning the Bushmaster's Triathlon. Holys finished first in the women's division with a time of one hour and seven minutes. Kulp finished first in the men's with an overall time of 53 minutes and seven seconds. The race consisted of a 400-meter swim, an 11-kilometer bicycle event, and a three-kilometer run.