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## Run remembers, honors New Jersey's fallen warriors

BY TERRY GAUTHIER MUESSIG STAFF WRITER • SEPTEMBER 27, 2010

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**HOLMDEL** — As Robert Quinlan searched through a field of name tags that were attached to American flags, his wife watched for a brief moment. Kate Quinlan then decided to help her husband look for their son's name. As Kate leaned over to lift a name tag, (the first one she touched), she called out, "Here he is."

The Quinlans, along with about 400 others, attended the second annual "New Jersey Run for the Fallen" a 140-mile run from Cape May to Holmdel to honor the 104 service members from New Jersey who have died since the war on terrorism began in 2001. The closing ceremony for the event was held in the parking lot of the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial site at the PNC Arts Center, here. The day also was to commemorate Gold Star Mother's Day.

The Bradley Beach couple attended the event to honor the fallen, including their son, Chief Warrant Officer John A. Quinlan, who died at age 36 on Feb. 18, 2007, in Afghanistan, when his helicopter crashed. He was in the Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, serving in Operation Enduring Freedom.

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"This is the least I can do for them (the fallen)," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Lynn Morelly of Massachusetts, who was stationed at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. She was one of a few dozen runners, all active-duty and reserve airmen and soldiers assigned to the joint base, who ran on behalf of a New Jersey soldier, sailor, airman or Marine who was killed in either Operation Iraqi Freedom or Enduring Freedom.

The route began at the Cape May lighthouse and continued across the state to Route 9 to Toms River, across back roads to Route 35 to Fort Monmouth, and then to Route 520. The final leg of the run was down Crawfords Corner Road to the arts center.

According to the website, a team of runners would run six miles in pairs, and marked each mile of their journey with an American flag and sign card "in an apolitical reflection of remembrance for each service member."

The runners wore T-shirts with a sign pinned on their backs reading: "I'm running for" and the name of a fallen soldier.



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Lisa Marretta (from left) of Colts Neck; with her friend Enza Jacobowitz of Jackson, sister of Luigi Marciante, who was killed in action in Iraq; and Amanda Henderson of Jackson participate in a ceremony after the New Jersey Run for the Fallen, which honors the 104 New Jersey service members who have been killed in war since 2001. (STAFF PHOTO: ROBERT WARD)

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For some, the race was personal. Marine Staff Sgt. John Frassetto, 29, of Toms River was running for his brother Vinny. Marine Pfc. Vincent M. Frassetto was killed at age 21 on Sept. 7, 2006, in Iraq's Anbar Province.

The length of the race grew by one mile last week, following the death of Navy Seal Petty Officer 3rd Class Denis Miranda of Toms River, who died on Sept. 21 in Afghanistan.

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The Race for the Fallen was started last year by Air Force Master Sgt. Bubba G. Beason, who was stationed at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, and is currently deployed in Afghanistan. He came back to New Jersey, however, to participate in the run. He is returning to active duty on Oct. 6.

"I'm home for this," said Beason, who is originally from Arkansas. He said the third run is already being planned.

"As long as I'm alive, that's my duty, to honor my fallen brothers," he said.

In addition to the those killed in war, the day also recognized Gold Star mothers. Shirley Parrello's 19-year-old son Cpl. Brian P. Parrello was in the U.S. Marine Corps. He died in an attack during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2005.

"It still hurts," Shirley Parrello of West Milford said.

Judi Tapper of Atco, the president of the Department of New Jersey of American Gold Star Mothers, paid tribute to the runners and to the mothers and wives in attendance. Her son, Petty Officer 1st Class David M. Tapper, was a Navy Seal who died in August 2003.

"I became aware of Gold Star Mothers after my son died," she said.

Since 1936, Gold Star Mother's Day is observed on the last Sunday in September. It originated during World War I, when families displayed small flags with a gold star in a window after the death of a loved one in the military service.

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