



Alton Junior ROTC participates in worldwide event to shoot for record; mark anniversary

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
April 26 2015 8:50 PM



It is not often a group competes for a Guinness World Record, but Alton's Junior ROTC did just that on Saturday morning, participating in a worldwide event to mark the founding of the organization.

Col. Peter Wangler of the Alton Junior ROTC explained what they were doing on Saturday by saying, “We are participating in a worldwide effort by all ROTC units: Air Force, Army, Marines, and Navy to mark the 99th anniversary in the United States. In Washington, D.C., the run started at noon, so we started at 11 o’clock Central time. Some in Japan started quite early to mark this anniversary.”

The present record for most participants in a 5K run all over the world is 110,000. Wangler said it was projected the Junior ROTC groups would have three times that number worldwide. He said he should know the worldwide total by sometime Monday to see if the record was eclipsed.

“Next year will be the 100th anniversary of the Junior ROTC and we are going to shoot for 1 million cadets and family members to join us in a similar run,” he said.

The participants on Saturday ran on the new Alton High School track, covering slightly more than three miles to reach the 5K standard. Some looked like competitive runners, while others took more time to finish the course. They were aided by some parent volunteers who provided water during the race and some food at the end of it.

Wangler has been at the leadership helm of the Alton Junior ROTC program for eight years. He said the program is a way to develop citizens of character dedicated to serving their nation and community.



“It is a neat program,” he said. “I like working with the kids. We have a lot of kids go on to college, but some choose to enlist in the military and some go out and gain employment, but I believe the program develops skills that help them be successful long after the program.”

The key part of the program is teaching cadets service above self and excellence in everything they do.

Wangler said in today’s day and age, teaching those values in the young people is so important.

“We expose the kids to some good things,” he said. “It is a great program.”



