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## WKU ROTC to host 13th Yates Memorial Run

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The poster features a large American flag at the top. Below it, the text reads "13th Eric D. Yates Memorial Run" in a mix of serif and script fonts. Underneath, it says "Hosted by WKU Army ROTC" and "5K Run and 2-Mile Walk". The date and time are "Saturday, September 16th - 9:00 AM". The location is "Chaney's Dairy Barn (9191 Nashville Road)". It states "Proceeds benefit: 1LT Eric Yates Scholarship Fund". There is a QR code for registration. Entry fees are "\$20 (Includes t-shirt); Race day: \$25". The website is "www.wku.edu/rotc". A circular portrait of 1LT Eric D. Yates in military uniform is on the left. Below the portrait, it says "1LT Eric D. Yates", "WKU Class of 2008", "Killed in Action", "September 17, 2010". At the bottom, it says "Run for a Reason" in script, "For More Information Contact: hunter.scheckels@wku.edu", "(270) 745-4293", and "www.wku.edu/rotc". The WKU Army ROTC logo is in the bottom left corner.

Provided by WKU ROTC

Megan Shefchik

Eric Yates was only 26 when an improvised explosive took his life in 2010.

But 13 years later, his legacy continues to help up-and-coming soldiers fund their education.

Western Kentucky University's Army ROTC program will host its 13th annual Eric D. Yates Memorial Run on Sept. 16 to raise funds for the Yates Memorial scholarship.



The 5K run and 2-mile walk will begin at Chaney's Dairy Barn, 9191 Nashville Rd., at 9 a.m.

Tony Struzik, professor of military science at WKU, said the memorial run is just one more way for them to keep Yates' memory alive.

"We always say that their sacrifice will not be in vain, and this goes along with that," Struzik said. "When you keep their memory alive and see how much of the family and community and the WKU ROTC team (is involved), that means a lot to our past alumni."

Attendees can preregister online for \$20 or at the event for \$25. Sponsors include Chaney's, Dominoes and Fruit of the Loom and coupons will be included with registration packages.

First Lt. Yates, a Hardin County native, graduated from WKU ROTC in 2008 before being stationed in the Kandahar district of Afghanistan. He served in the Army's 101st Airborne Division from Fort Campbell.

Two scholarships are handed out annually to one man and one woman within WKU's ROTC program. Since 2010, almost two dozen students have received \$3,000 scholarships through the program.

The fund also helped renovate the ROTC cadet lounge, featuring mementos of Yates' life. His portrait and uniform have been hung around the room, along with a framed copy of his "just in case" letter written to his family.

In it, he details the "knowledge and wisdom" built over his 26 years, including "liquor is better than whiskey" and "watch the original Star Wars trilogy." But between the humor, Yates leaves nuggets of advice.

"Take a chance – get out there and do something you wouldn't normally do," he wrote. "Once, an army buddy and myself ate breakfast with a homeless man in Oklahoma City, OK and I must say he left an impression on me."

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## Michael Collins

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