

News and stories

Survivors of Fallen Military Gather at Churchill

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Chris Kenning | [Courier Journal](#)

More than 900 families of fallen military members gathered Sunday at Churchill Downs for the 7th annual Survivors Day at the Races, honoring those who lost their lives since Sept. 11, 2001.

Families came from 17 states to dine and watch racing from the sunny balconies of Millionaires Row, many decked out in Derby-style hats. The day included granting scholarships and a performance by Louisville's Linkin' Bridge music group. One race was named in honor of the Survivors of Fallen Military Heroes.

Even though it had been six years since Kathy Yates of Rineyville, Ky. lost her son, Lt. Eric Yates in Afghanistan, she said it was heartening to be around other families who knew what she had experienced.

Her son, a Western Kentucky ROTC graduate assigned to Fort Knox, died from injuries received when insurgents attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device in the Zhari district of Afganistan's Kandahar province, according to the Army.

"It's nice to see a lot of people we know at these events," Yates said.

Vena McCall, of Georgia, sat at a round table next to her daughter, whose father died as the result of a 2010 IED attack in Afghanistan, She said it was helpful for her daughter to be around other children who had experienced such losses.