

RUNNING SHORTS

SHSU ROTC students run in marathon honoring prisoners of World War II

By Darren Grant



The phrase “Bataan Death March”—a brutal, sixty-mile march of American prisoners-of-war in the Philippines--means a lot to anyone familiar with World War II. It means a lot to runners, too, who hold their own annual version of this march, in memory of the first.

This second Bataan Death March (bataanmarch.com) is held each March outside of White Sands, New Mexico. The 26.2-mile course starts at the south end of the Missile Range out there, strikes out along the desert floor to the north, then charges into the rocky hills west of Alamogordo and loops back to the start. With 8,000 participants, 2,000 support personnel, and 180 porta-potties en route, the local jackrabbits don’t know what hit them.

It was a perfect fit for Lt. Col. Mark Davis, ROTC Program Director at SHSU. Davis likes to run. “It keeps the head clear,” he said, “and keeps me in shape.” He also tries to develop “service leadership” in his ROTC cadets. “Doing that means challenging the cadets to get out into the community, get involved, and make an impact,” he said. “That is how we try to build them up.”

So, with Davis’ instigation, the cadets put together a team, the “Bearkat Battalion,” and began training for the event. One cadet took charge of organizing the training schedule and logistics, while another raised travel funds.

In the team competition, everyone must finish together. And in the heavy division, which the Bearkat Battalion entered, each participant must carry a pack weighing at least 35 pounds. The practice marches, up to 20 miles in length, were no picnic.

But it paid off on race day, Sunday, March 25, because the Bearkats were ready. There were seven in total: Davis; individual participant Alexis Carney, a senior; and the Bearkat Battalion: Jose Arriaga, Julian King, Joshua Pracht, Erick Rodas, and Matthew Saye. Carney completed the 14.2 mile “Honorary March” and the others completed the full marathon, finishing in just under 10 hours.

It was a long haul—in more ways than one. Just to get to the race, you must drive to El Paso and then some. And then back again, once it is over. So, the day after the race, the marchers loaded their sore muscles into their cars and drove all the way home to Huntsville. They were in class Tuesday morning.

(Ken Johnson compiles the “Recent Race Results” section of this column. Please send your race results to him at 1941runner@sbcglobal.net.)

Recent race results:

Sunday Night 5K, The Woodlands

Cindy Pate, 57	38:50
Ken Johnson, 76	40:54

Bataan Memorial Death March, White Sands Missile Range, NM, Mar. 25

Marathon (26.2 miles)

Jason Wallace, 43	4:06:54 (light)
Mark Davis, 40	9:57:12 (heavy)
SHSU Bearkat Battalion	9:57:11 (heavy)

(Erick Rodas, Joshua Pracht, Matthew Saye, Julian King, Jose Arriaga)

14.2-Mile Honorary March

John Cook, 62	4:15:21 (light)
Alexis Carney, 22	5:17:50 (heavy)

Texas 10 Series, College Station, Mar. 25

10 Miles

Jose Moreno, 56	1:24:48
Steve Bickford, 57	1:26:12
Steve Allen, 45	1:28:21
Angelina Santos, 52	1:31:17
Sharon Valles, 45	1:43:16
Lisa Black, 39	1:50:42
Kathy Lehman, 42	2:06:32
Ken Johnson, 76	2:27:35

5 Miles

David Keithley, 36	49:58
Gretchen Dixon, 49	51:20
Ray Sarno, 70	1:06:11
Dianna Sarno, 55	1:06:12
Cathy Bickford, 56	1:06:27

Texas Independence Relay (200 miles), Gonzales to Houston, Mar. 24-25

Cindy Pate, 57 and Team

Bearathon Half Marathon, Waco, Mar. 24

Christine Hoover, 51 2:10:05

SCOPE 5K, Houston, Mar. 24

Pauline Nicodemus, 52 25:43
Dylan McDowell, 21 32:11
Kelly Jackson, 37 49:49
Sage Jackson, 7 55:33
Richard Jackson, 42 56:16
Veronica Araiza, 30 1:00:45

Run Houston! Minute Maid Park 5K, Houston, Mar. 24

David Keithley, 36 28:44
Velvia Keithley, 44 1:13:29

Run for the House 5K, College Station, Mar. 24

Ken Johnson, 76 40:05