

RUNNING SHORTS

The Bataan Memorial Death March

By Katy Lampson

On April 9, 1942, in the midst of World War II, roughly 100,000 American and Filipino soldiers were handed over to Japanese forces after surrendering the Battle of Bataan in the Philippines. These men, under the command of General Edward “Ned” P. King, Jr., were then marched for nearly a week through the jungles by Japanese armed forces to prison camps in Cabanatuan.

The conditions these men faced, later accounted as a Japanese war crime, were beyond inhumane. Soldiers were forced to march non-stop in tropical heat with no food and literally, a sip of water. Those who fell or could not keep up were brutally tortured and murdered. Thousands of American servicemen were killed in this savage trek across the Philippine jungle, and those who survived endured unimaginable misery.

The Bataan Memorial Death March Marathon began in 1989 to commemorate and honor these brave men, and is now held at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico. Fittingly, the race is a marathon distance (26.2 mile) course, run mostly on sand, has an elevation change of a little over 1,200 feet, and is deemed to be a grueling challenge.

Huntsville resident, and SHSU professor, Christopher Wilson has run this unique marathon twice previously, and is making his third attempt on March 30th. Wilson has also recruited fellow Huntsvillite, John Cook, to join him on this adventure. The two have been training for the race on the trails at Huntsville State Park, where some of the conditions mimic the terrain of the missile range.

Wilson, who has run 9 marathons and 4 ultra marathons, claims this one to be an experience unlike any other marathon he has ever run. The few living survivors greet the runners as they cross the finish line, giving each one a handshake and a word of thanks for their efforts. The sense of accomplishment at Bataan must be far more rewarding than a finish at any other marathon.

This marathon is tough, but no matter how demanding the course may be, it’s treachery pales in comparison to the suffering the men of the Bataan Death March endured.

Congratulations to fellow Running Shorts columnist Ken Johnson, who recently completed the Texas Marathon Triple, which included running the Texas Marathon in Kingwood, the Surfside Beach Marathon, and the Seabrook Marathon all within three months. Johnson, 66, was the oldest of 42 runners to complete this challenge, and was awarded the Texas Marathon Triple Jacket.

The following is a list of our local runners who recently completed races (all runners are from Huntsville unless otherwise noted):

The Texas Independence Relays (203.67 miles) March 1 & 2:

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| Norman Langwell, Jr. (& team) | 29:07:10 |
| Mark Stephenson (& team) | 31:22:16 |
| Adrienne Langelier (& team) | 31:45:59 |
| Katy Lampson (& team) | 31:45:59 |

Run The Woodlands 5K, March 8th:

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| Katy Lampson | 28:56 |
| Ken Johnson | 33:12 |

7 Hills Running Club vs. The Woodlands Running Club 5K, March 9th:

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| Robert Duncan | 20:40 |
| J.C. Guzman | 21:06 |
| Sheridan Grant | 22:34 |
| Nick Bellnoski | 22:52 |
| Niki Bellnoski | 23:09 |
| Darren Grant | 23:21 |
| Norman Langwell, Jr. | 24:09 |
| Henru Guzman | 24:10 |
| Josh Holden | 24:11 |
| Joe Hernandez | 24:14 |
| Michael Deane | 24:19 |
| Phillip Clark | 25:26 |
| Chris Kunkel | 25:47 |
| Colten Langwell | 26:25 |
| Glen Carter | 27:44 |
| Ben Johnson | 29:57 |
| Jan Parks | 30:30 |
| Katy Lampson | 31:33 |
| Deanna Langwell | 31:33 |
| Ron Davis | 32:54 |
| Jon Walk | 37:10 |
| True Cousins | 37:40 |
| Don Ortloff | 41:05 |
| Chantel Langwell | 45:52 |
| Millie Langwell | 45:53 |
| Mary Ann Davis | 48:32 |

Seabrook Marathon, March 16th:

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| Norman Langwell, Jr. | 4:19:06 |
| Ken Johnson | 6:06:22 |

Upcoming races in the Huntsville area are the Run the Trails 5 miler & 5K on March 30th at the Lampson Ranch, and Hog's Hunt 50K & 25K on April 5th at Huntsville State Park. For more details and a list of other races in the area, visit the Seven Hills Running Club web site at <http://www.7hills.us> and click on Race Schedule.

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