

Students march to remember soldiers

BY JENNIFER MARKS
Staff Reporter

With 26.2 mountainous miles of sand, pea-gravel, pavement and loose dirt, the marathon-length Bataan Memorial Death March is no walk in the park.

Thirteen cadets and three cadre, or officers, from Truman State ROTC will walk the 26.2 miles in the New Mexican desert at the 23rd Annual Bataan Memorial Death March on March 25. Throughout past years, this arduous commemoration of the original Bataan Death March has provided these Truman ROTC cadets and cadre with a grueling mental and physical challenge.

The march commemorates an event that occurred during April 1942, when thousands of American and Filipino soldiers perished when Japanese forces marched the prisoners of war for days through the jungles of the Philippines. Today, a memorial march takes place at White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico every year to remember the fallen and the survivors.

Sophomore Cadet Adrienn Myers planned Truman ROTC's participation in this year's march. To pre-

pare, Myers said they have gone on long runs for cardio and endurance training in addition to rucks, a run while carrying additional weight, of increasing length. They started with an eight mile last semester and worked up to 10- and 12-mile rucks, Myers said. But this semester, they've upped their distance, she said. They completed a 16 mile ruck during early January and a 21 mile ruck by early February.

For Myers, she said the training is a great way to see how far they can push themselves mentally and physically.

"At the beginning of the year when we did our first eight mile, I thought I was going to die," Myers said. "But it was really a state of mind."

In the Army, the longest ruck most people ever do is around 12 miles, so by completing the Bataan march, they will walk farther than they probably will at any point during their lives, she said.

A veteran of last year's march, senior Cadet Captain Ryan Newman, participated in the mens heavy division, meaning he carried a 35-pound rucksack on his back the entire 26.2 miles. In addition to the march be-

ing split into light, those who carry nothing, and heavy, those who carry the 35 pounds, participants can choose to participate as teams or as individuals. Newman said Truman ROTC participated as teams last year. After some cadets, including Newman, finished significantly faster than the team, they ended up waiting just shy of the finish line for more than an hour because teams are required to finish within 30 seconds of each other, he said. To prevent this from happening again, Newman said everyone is participating as an individual this year.

But last year's miserable march, with its difficult conditions and frustrating end, proved to be more than a physical challenge for Newman.

"It's a big mental thing," Newman said. "It's how much you can put up with and having the mental fortitude to continue to push on."

Although the march is painful and trying, Newman said survivors of the original death march attend to support every year. At about mile 21, when blisters start forming and marchers are tired and cussing at everything they see, the presence of the survivors really puts things into perspective, he said. With their



Submitted photo
Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Byers weighs his 35-pound ruck sack before completing the 26.2-mile memorial march, March 27, 2011. Byers will be marching for the second year March 25.

lives literally on the line, these men were forced to march with no food or water, but here, every three miles someone is there with an orange and Gatorade, he said.

"If these guys can push through that, this is no big deal," he said. "Just to see them out there is worth walking through the desert for."

For Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Byers, a cadre on last year's march, the march is about personal goals, experience and knowing how far participants can push past their limits. The terrain plays a major role in the misery of the march, along with the almost 10,000 foot altitude vari-

ance, Byers said.

At about mile 20, he said, you come down a beautiful black-top road, knowing that if you were to continue straight on the road you'd come right to the finish. Instead, the march track weaves you around for miles in pea-gravel and sand. At one point, Byers said, you can see the finish line over a short wall, but you won't hit it for another three miles. "Really the biggest obstacle you have to face out there is yourself," Byers said. "One of your biggest enemies, especially at the end there, is just your own brain and understanding that you can overcome this."

SAs reflect about their experiences

BY KATE LINMAN
Staff Reporter

Door decorations, bulletin boards, programs, staff meetings, hall desk, duty phone, building a community and securing the safety of residents are just a few of the responsibilities Truman State student advisers have. SAs are compensated with 75 percent of their room and board paid for, but some wonder if the job is worth it. Each SA has a different experience that affects their perspective.

Junior Aubrey Crowley, who has been an SA in Centennial Hall for the past two years, said she has enjoyed her experience. Crowley's experience with her SA during her freshman year led her to apply for the position. Fellow SAs and residents made her want to continue being an SA. Although the time spent varies week to week, Crowley said she spends an average of 10 hours each week completing duties.

Crowley said she hasn't had any problems balancing her academic load and her SA responsibilities, but she does know some SAs do. Being an SA has many benefits, she said,

meeting people being one of the largest. She said she met about 80 new people from the job and enjoys fostering strong, quality connections with people. She also thinks the job taught her valuable life skills, which will help her as a medical student and physician. Time management, organization and multitasking are just a few of these.

While Crowley said she enjoys being a role model for her residents, she said it comes with pressure.

"We live in a fishbowl, where everyone can see everything that we are doing," Crowley said. "It's important that the things we are doing don't reflect poorly on us because it can reflect poorly on the department. I guess sometimes that pressure and the limitations on what we are allowed to do can hinder a typical college experience."

Senior Ross Knight was an SA in Dobson Hall his sophomore year and an apartment manager spring semester his junior year. Knight has a more critical perspective about being an SA.

Knight also became interested in being an SA from his freshman year SA. He said his

SA pushed him and his suitemates to consider it. Knight and two of his closest friends became SAs because of it.

Knight said he never had a problem balancing school and SA duties, but he did encounter difficulties with his social life because of students' negative connotations associated with SAs.

"People see a handful of SAs that enjoy the power and enjoy the ability to get people in trouble and they stereotype everyone that way," Knight said.

Knight said he decided not to continue being an SA because of differing ideals when it came to alcohol policy enforcement, he thinks the department should take a more understanding approach to alcohol enforcement and consider each situation's context.

"I saw a lot of people get in trouble for things I couldn't personally justify," Knight said.

He said he recognizes the department must view situations as cut and dry to run effectively.

Although Knight had his differences with Residence Life, he said he met wonderful

people and learned a lot through experiences like peer-mediating and effective strategies for advertising.

"It made it worthwhile in the end, but at the time it was stressful enough that I wouldn't have been able to see that silver lining," Knight said.

John Gardner, director of the Office of Residence Life, said the job description states it as a 20-hour-per-week job. He said a survey conducted by the Resident Life Department showed that a large majority of SAs work 11 to 20 hours per week. Some work more than 20 or less than 11.

"They all have quite a bit on their plate," Gardner said. "If we have concerns we'll work with that student staff member one-on-one to help build their time management skills."

Gardner said the department asks their student staff members to show good judgment in their policy enforcement.

"We take the safety and security and the learning environment of our residents very seriously and sometimes that can be perceived as enforcing policy too harshly," Gardner said.



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