

ANOTHER ONE FOR THE RECORD BOOKS by Lynne Bermel



For the past 23 years, the Army Ten-Miler has brought thousands of runners to Washington, making it the largest 10-miler in the U.S. and second largest in the world.

For many, the Army Ten-Miler is a tradition. Part of the appeal lies in the course, which winds

its way from the Pentagon across the Potomac River, passing several national monuments before the finish line back at the Pentagon.

It's also the rigorous organization, the crowd support and the distinct military flavour – from the U.S. and Canadian Army skydiving teams who “jump start” the race to the carnival-like atmosphere at the finish line with the 50 tents, bands, food and prizes in the “HOOAH” zone - which causes the race to sell out within days of opening.

“The Army Ten-Miler is a unique experience,” said Lieutenant-Colonel Doug Martin, a Canadian officer serving with Canada’s embassy in Washington. “It’s the whole Army spirit and chance to run with the soldiers that sets it apart.”

Despite this year’s unseasonably warm temperatures, the race was one for the record books.

It was also the closest finish in the event’s history.

Private Jose Ferreira of the Brazilian army out-sprinted teammate Reginaldo Campos Jr. in the final 50 m to win by *one second* in 49 minutes and 21 seconds.

Brazil claimed the top four places to take top individual and military team honours.



Private Jose Ferreira wins by one second over Brazilian teammate (Runners Web)

Firaya Zhdanova, 46, a former Russian soldier who runs for Atlanta-based Foot Solutions team, took the lead from six miles and never looked back, cruising to a cushy 40 second victory over Susannah Kvasnicka of Washington. Zhdanova’s time of 58:31 broke Alisa Harvey’s master’s record set last year.

Behind them were 17,600 finishers, half the field military and half civilian, including deployed US and allied forces racing in 10-mile “shadow version” runs in camps in Iraq.

They not only had the heat to contend with, but the ever-present possibility of mortar attacks.

Lieutenant Ivan Castro, a survivor of a mortar attack in Baghdad a year ago, was the top finisher among the record number of military amputees who took part as members of the “Missing Parts in Action” team.

Castro, who lost his right eye and was blinded in his left eye during the attack, ran tethered to his training partner to finish in one hour 25 minutes. He also ran with a wrist band bearing the name Sgt Ralph Poras, one of his soldiers killed during the mortar attack. “I carried him with me today and I crossed the finish line for all those other guys who didn’t make it.”

Major David Rozelle, who lost his right foot to an anti-tank mine in Iraq in June 2003, said that the Army Ten-Miler gave amputees recovering in the Walter Reed Army Medical Centre and other centres something to look forward to during their months of rehabilitation.

“We’re running to show America that we aren’t beaten.”



Russian Firaya Zhdanova cruises to victory (Runners Web)



Record number of military amputees compete (Runners Web)