



Lew Goldberg: Running (and walking) into the Army Ten-Miler History Books

Lew Goldberg doesn't consider himself an athlete.

In fact, at 62, he doesn't even necessarily consider himself a serious runner.

“The reality of it is I'm not a running enthusiast like so many people that run all the time...I'm not a fast runner,” said Goldberg, who placed number 10, 621 out of 10,698 male runners at the 2008 Army Ten-Miler.

But that hasn't stopped Goldberg from stepping up to the starting line every October since that first race 25 years ago.

“You do a few and then you say ‘Heck,’ I'm just going to keep doing it,” he said of his motivation to run the race all these years. “Quite honestly, I think I do it now only because I've done it every year.”

Goldberg got his start with the Army Ten-Miler as an in-shape soldier.

“The Army had sent me to school at Ft. McNair in 1985,” he said. “That was the first year of the Army Ten-Miler.”

After completing his studies at the National War College, Goldberg stayed on at the Pentagon for seven more years – and ran the race each fall. After retiring from the Army as a Colonel in 1993, Goldberg moved to Huntsville, Alabama to take a job as a defense contractor for Applied Research Associates. But even while he lived in Alabama, he returned every year to attend the AUSA annual conference – and to run the race.

He moved back to Crystal City to open an office of Applied Research Associates in 1999 and has continued to keep his commitment to the Army Ten-Miler.

Goldberg, though, isn't one to run the race by himself. For him, the day is all about fun and camaraderie. Over the years, he's recruited a number of his co-workers, friends and family to run with him.



In 1990, for example, when he was a division chief, Goldberg had all 15 of his staff out on the course. This year, he'll have his two daughters, ages 33 and 37, his grandson and four people from his office in tow.

Unlike the serious runners in the race, who are more focused on pacing and passing other runners, Goldberg has been able to take in the scene over the past 25 years.

One of the main things that has changed since the race was founded?

“More portapotties.”

The course, too, is full of fun anecdotes.

“There are a lot of funny things,” said Goldberg. “Watching people pull off to the side of the road and trying to be creative hiding (while they go to the bathroom). (One runner) would bring a full-size American flag. People would carry it for him. There's that patriotic aspect. He was a former Marine...and then you'll see people in tuxedo shirts, (I've seen) three young ladies in bunny outfits. Standard things like that where people are having fun.”

Much like the runner with the American flag, the patriotic part of the race plays a big role every year, said Goldberg.

“The opening ceremony with the National Anthem (is touching),” he said. “After 9/11, I cried for about six months. I have a memory of standing there (the first race after Sept. 11). They played the National Anthem at the beginning of the race. Looking around, seeing 25,000 people, it's special...And then the places you go by, the Capitol, the Mall. It's a feel good event is all I can say.”

Although Goldberg isn't a “serious” runner, he does train for race day starting months in advance. These days, he does a run/walk pace.

Although, “In my heyday, I would run it all.”

For now, Goldberg has no plans to break his Army Ten-Miler streak, but “I don't think I'm trying to set a record of running it until I die.”

Each year Goldberg is just happy to cross the finish line. As far as he's concerned, finishing is as good as winning.

“I think for the average person that's not a dedicated runner, it's a challenge,” he said. “So many people don't run or can't run 10 miles. So it becomes a challenge in the sense that you've got to be dedicated and diligent...99 percent aren't winners of the overall race, but they're all winners because they had an objective and they met it.”

