

# Sill Soldier competes in Boston Marathon

By James Brabene

Competing in only the third marathon, Maj. Loren Todd finished the Boston Marathon in 2 hours, 50 minutes and 39 seconds April 18 finishing 618th out of more than 23,000 finishers.

The race culminated his rededication to making fitness a priority in his life in December 2009. Having served 25 months as a battery commander that included two combat tours in Iraq, Todd, age 32, realized the combined stresses of command and combat left him out of shape by his standards.

"I've always been a fairly decent runner but have never done marathons before," said Todd, who began his fitness quest carrying 185 pounds on his 6-foot frame. "If I'd run an Army fitness test back then I would have finished in the middle of the pack, which might be OK for a regular person's standards, but it didn't come close to where I wanted to be."

So, Todd got into fitness seriously researching diet and training techniques for distance running. Along the way he competed in a couple half marathons and set a goal to run a marathon. He found his ability to overcome adversity in a bedrock fundamental of Army life: self-discipline.

"This translates well to marathon training, because it reminds me when things get really hard, you know you're doing it for a purpose and will be better for it in the outcome," he said.

He needed all that discipline and more to meet a demanding lifestyle placed before him. Serving as an operational test officer with

the Fires Test Directorate, Todd needed to go back to school to meet certain education requirements. His day began at 4 a.m. with marathon training, he then worked a full day and went to graduate school until 10 p.m.

"The whole process forced me to focus on efficiency," he said. "It made me better able to focus on the matter at hand and to plan out what I needed to get done each day."

Todd's marathon training started with laying down a base of mileage over weeks and months. During this time he also ran a couple half marathons, he remembered his split times for one of these first half marathons was slower than the splits he later ran in Boston. He then found a 16-week preparation program online that included runs from four to 20 miles, intervals and tempo runs that push a particular pace for extended lengths of time. The program began with Todd running 40 miles per week and peaked at 65 miles about three weeks prior to his race.

Although he's always been a decent runner going six to 10 miles at a steady pace, Todd admitted speed work and interval training were a weakness.

"It was as much mental as physical, because you can get through one 800-meter interval, at 80 percent of your max heart rate," Todd said. "But, you have to overcome the mental anxiety of still having five more intervals to do to achieve what is needed to meet that goal. At first it was hard, but it got easier as I stayed with it."

### Boston bound

Todd chose the Boston



Photo courtesy of www.marathonfoto.com

**Maj. Loren Todd, Fires Test Directorate, cruises along at a 6-minute, 30-second pace at the Boston Marathon on April 18. Todd crossed the finish line 618th out of more than 23,000 finishers.**

Marathon, something he called the gold standard for marathons, in part because only elite runners compete in that race. He first had to qualify for the event by running another marathon in no more than 3:10:00; he ran a 2:54 to qualify last October.

"It's kind of a bucket list goal just to get into the race; some people try but cannot meet the qualification requirement," he said. "I became completely obsessed with this for a while, but that

helped me to draw on my self-discipline to train right to run how I wanted to."

Although Todd ran a steady race throughout, staying close to his 6:30-mile pace, he thought he started a bit too fast. At the 10-mile mark his breathing was still measured while others around him were already "huffing and puffing."

### Heartbreak Hill

Perhaps the defining portion of the race, Heartbreak Hill is actually the final hill

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Maj. Loren Todd

in a series of four rises that occur in Newton, Mass., about 20 miles into the race. This mileage point equates to what many runners refer to as "hitting the wall" or the point where the body runs of energy and can no longer sustain the desired pace. Todd's experience drastically differed in that he miscounted which hill he was on as he neared the crest of Heartbreak Hill. From that point, the run to the finish line was all downhill.

"Heartbreak Hill has nothing on the Wichita Mountains of Oklahoma," he said emphatically. "The hills I trained on at Fort Sill were harder than anything I encountered during the race."

### Running tall

Returning to urban Boston, Todd said about four miles from downtown Boston he saw the John Hancock Tower and realized he knew he would finish. Up to that point he wondered if he would hit the wall or get injured and be unable to complete the race.

"From there to the finish line it was almost an out-of-body experience. Here I was running the same route that some of the world's best athletes ran in some of the most memorable races. I felt strong and motivated," he said.

Recalling a special moment an ear-to-ear grin creased his face as Todd

spoke of seeing his wife, Maj. Erin Eike, 2nd Battalion, 14th Field Artillery at Mile 23. Sharing that passing moment together gave him another big boost of energy. Drawing close to the finish line, he boosted his speed crossing completely exhausted.

To put his finishing time in Army perspective, the 6:30-second pace exceeded the run requirement for the toughest age group of the Army Physical Fitness Test 13.1 times consecutively for the 26.2-mile race, Todd said.

### Race review

The wall didn't factor into Todd's race as he said he never hit that physical state. He believes, given his depleted feeling at the end, he ran the best race he could run. Still, afterward he was encouraged thinking about preparing for his next race.

"I'm pretty competitive, and so I want to see how low I can get my finishing time — that challenge keeps me motivated," he said.

His other motivation for running what he called a destination marathon was to get away for a nice vacation with his wife.

"We've both been working really hard, and at times it was like we were two ships passing in the night," he said. "After the race I sat and relaxed a couple hours, but later we went out together, explored the town and had a great time."

## Job vacancies

The following are job vacancy announcements at Fort Sill.

### Non-appropriated Fund

The NAF job information center is open Mondays through Fridays from 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Apprentice route technician, NF 0856-03, regular

part-time, (min. 20 hours), \$12.55 to \$20.91 per hour.

Brew master, NF 1101-03, flexible, \$10.55 per hour.

Child and Youth Program assistant, CY 1702-02, \$10.95 per hour, flexible.

Cook, NA 7404-04, \$8.94 per hour, flexible.

Fitness program specialist, NF 0030-03, flexible, \$11 per hour.

Food service worker, NA 7408-02, \$7.77 per hour, flexible.

Maintenance worker leader, NL 4749-07, regular part-time, \$11.86 per hour.

Marketing assistant, NF 1101-03, regular full-time, \$27,000 per year.

Recreation aide (lifeguard pools), NF-0189-01, 13 flexi-

ble positions indoor and outdoor pools, \$8 per hour.

### Internal

Open to current Fort Sill employees or other individuals with competitive status:

Contract specialist (procurement/cost analysis), GS-1102-11, closes today.

Technical editor, GS-1083-11, closes today.

Training instructor (FAADS), GS-1712-11, closes today.

Library technician (office automation), GS-1411-04, closes Friday.

Natural and cultural resources specialist (NEPA), GS-0401-09, closes Saturday.

Supervisory social worker (substance abuse) YC-0185-02), closes Monday.

Supervisory psychologist (substance abuse) YC-0180-02 closes Monday.

Heavy mobile equipment repairer, WG-5803-09, closes May 17.

Natural resources specialist, GS-0401-09, closes June 9.

Environmentalist, GS-0401-11, closes June 22.

### External

Open to any U.S. citizen: Technical editor, GS-1083-11, closes today.

Supervisory physician (family practice), YG-0602-02, closes Friday.

Supervisory museum curator, GS-1015-12, closes Saturday.

Materials handler (MVO), WG-6907-05, closes Monday.

Physical therapist, YH-0633-02, closes Monday.

Materials handler (MVO), GS-6907-05, closes May 12.

Heavy mobile equipment repairer, WG-5803-09, closes May 17.

Natural resources specialist, GS-0401-09, closes June 9.

Environmentalist, GS-0401-11 (six positions), closes June 22.

Diagnostic radiologic technologist (mammography), YI-0647-02/02, closes Sept. 30.

Medical officer, GS-0602-13/14/15, closes Sept. 30.

Registered nurse (various specialties), GS-0610-09/10/11/12, closes Sept. 30.

Veterinarian, YH-0701-02, closes Sept. 30.

Veterinarian, GS-0701-12/13, closes Sept. 30.

Counseling psychologist (Army Substance Abuse Program), YA-0180-02, closes Dec. 31.

Counseling psychologist (Army Substance Abuse Program), GS-0180-11, closes Dec. 31.

Social worker (Army Substance Abuse Program), GS-0185-11, closes Dec. 31.

Social worker (Army Substance Abuse Program), YA-0185-02, closes Dec. 31.

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