



www.ChicagoHalfMarathon.com

American Soldiers in Iraq Shadow the Chicago Half Marathon

CHICAGO – While Chicagoans and runners across the nation prepare for the 13th annual Chicago Half Marathon, four United States soldiers serving in Sulimaniya, Iraq decided to train for their own “shadow race” overseas. On September 13, as 20,000 runners hit the streets of Chicago, Captain Tim Kirby, Captain Andy Hightower, Captain Charles Greene, and Major Wenceslao Angulo will also complete the half marathon. The difference is their route will not be along Lake Shore Drive, but rather a much smaller track almost 6,500 miles away from their fellow competitors in Chicago.

These four brave American soldiers that serve with the Border Transition Team (BTT) 131 from Ft. Riley, Kansas have found training for the 2009 Chicago Half Marathon to be an outlet from their daily missions in Iraq. When on duty, eleven soldiers from all backgrounds of the US Army live and work with their Iraqi counterparts in the Department of Border Enforcement (DBE), Ministry of Interior, Iraq. They instruct, advise, and prepare the Iraqi soldiers on border security. They also have projects rebuilding schools, hospitals and drilling water wells in the remote mountain areas of the region.

For these soldiers, running has become a pastime that not only relieves stress from the dangers of their job, but also helps them set and achieve personal goals within the limits of a combat zone. Captain Tim Kirby explains the men’s experience running in Iraq,

“Running is an outlet for the team. However, running in and around the patrol base is a dangerous task. We are in a combat zone, but under the watchful eye of our partner unit we run where we can, often running multiple laps in our small area in order to get in a long run. There are no runner friendly areas. Dodging cars and trucks keeps the runner aware of their surroundings as they also pass herds of sheep and wild dogs that come up to the road to greet the runner. Some of the paths are dirt and rocks which lead away from the patrol base and are free of traffic but are heavily mined.”

The soldiers’ unending dedication to their country is obvious. However what is not as apparent when meeting the valiant men of BTT 131 is their deep perseverance and devotion to a sport that has become more than a form of daily exercise. Even as they risk their lives to serve the United States, these four soldiers continue to pursue their individual passions, as Captain Kirby put it, “all for the love of running!”

Good luck to Captain Kirby and his team in Iraq on September 13, along with all the runners of the Chicago Half Marathon! Registration for the race is still open at www.chicagohalfmarathon.com.

About: **US Road Sports & Entertainment Group** is Dallas-based company dedicated to the production of world-class endurance events. The mission of US Road Sports is to offer an unparalleled participant sports experience that showcases host communities and endures as a deeply valued local asset through events that are a part of the city's culture, identity and brand. For each participant, US Road Sports strives to offer events that allow participants of all skill levels the opportunity to improve their physical and mental health, and accomplish life-altering goals while having fun. US Road Sports provides sponsors and municipalities highly effective exposure to help maximize their presence and message in the community.

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