

Army War College Community completes the virtual Bataan Death March on the Appalachian Trail

By Robert Martin, USAWC PAO 28 April 2021



Carlisle Community member hike along the Appalachian Trail during the Memorial Bataan Death March

“The day we trained for all winter has come and gone. April 10, 2021 turned out to be one we will not soon forget,” said USAWC Command Sgt. Maj. Brian Flom. “I could not think of a better way to begin the day than Col. Doug Winton’s remarks of why we marched to commemorate the 79th Anniversary of the Bataan Death March.”

Winton, who chairs a war college teaching department, spoke of the reasons why U.S. forces were defending Bataan, provided a basic summary of the event, and described the significance of memorializing the event for current service members and in particular for the New Mexico National Guard’s 200th Coast Artillery who lost 900 Guardsman during the march.

The military community was well represented on the 26.2-mile course, or the 13.1 mile alternative, along the Appalachian Trail. Participants included Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines; active duty and retirees; civilian employees and family members; international students and International spouses.

"It was a great experience," said Winton. "I'm very grateful for the deeper friendships and new friendships that came from the training."

"I'm excited about the possibility of doing it again next year," Winton said.

It all started when Flom and his wife Monika were looking for something to challenge themselves during the Covid-19 winter. Having completed the Bataan Death March in 2012, they realized that this year's virtual event would be an excellent opportunity.

"The fellowship was nothing short of amazing," said Flom. "I think all would agree that the benefits our mind gained from this experience far outweighed those of the body. During the last few months, we shared experiences ranging from laughter and tears to connections and reflections. Each time we came off the trail, we had gained a new perspective in life, learned something about someone we never knew, and more importantly, gained a new friendship," Flom said.

Before the March began and after Col. Winton's remarks, USAWC Prof. retired Col. Jim Di Crocco's read a poem written by U.S. Army Lt. Henry G. Lee. Lee, a survivor of the march who later died while a prisoner of war. His poems were found wrapped in canvas and buried in the ground of the prison camp.

I see no gleam of victory alluring

No chance of splendid booty or of gain

If I endure – I must go on enduring

And my reward for bearing pain – is pain

Yet, though the thrill, the zest, the hope are gone

Something within me keeps me fighting on