WHO: Army ROTC Bataan Death March Team
WHAT: Bataan Memorial Death March
WHEN: 23 MARCH 14
WHERE: White Sands Missile Range, NM
SUMMARY: The University of Wyoming Army ROTC “Cowboy Battalion” had 13 Cadets participate in the 25th Annual Bataan Memorial Death March Marathon

On April 9th, 1942 tens of thousands of American and Filipino Soldiers were surrendered to Japanese forces while in defense of the islands of Luzon, Corregidor and the harbor defense forts of the Philippines. The Americans were Army, Army Air Corps, Navy and Marines. After being surrendered to the Japanese, they were forced to march upwards of 80 miles for days through the scorching heat in the Philippine jungles. Thousands perished throughout the march, and those who survived faced the hardships of a prisoner of war camp; others were wounded or killed. In 1989 the ROTC Department at the New Mexico State University began sponsoring the memorial march to mark a page in history. This has grown from the beginning of 100 participants to over 6,000 this year with marchers from all over the world participating.

This year the Cowboy Battalion sent one male heavy team, one coed heavy team, two female light individuals and one male heavy individual. Everyone participated on the same course, but the heavy participants wore a 35 pound rucksack. The team this year endured over 11 weeks of training to include 40+ miles a week and physical core workouts, 6 days a week. This training brought about the spirit of competition, esprit de corps, leadership and teamwork to navigate this 26.2 mile course. Between the grueling terrain, uneven dirt trails, a four mile long ascent and a one mile long “sand pit”, the humbling experience to honor the memories of those that survived and lost their lives was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The Cadets scored very well. Peter Kelchner scored 2nd place in the Individual Heavy category out of 128 participants. He came in about 2 minutes behind the 1st place runner. The Men’s Heavy team comprised of Cadets Summerbell, Flanchsa, Goodwin, Rusk and Galvin came in 2nd out of 44 teams. The Coed Heavy team comprised of Cadets Johnson, Carrollo, Lichtfuss, Hamblin and Carswell came in 8th out of 16 teams. We had two Female Civilian Light runners: Holly Reiner and Hannah Plush. Cadet Reiner came in 5th out of 748 individuals and 2nd in her age group. Cadet Plush came in 31st of 748 individuals and 9th in her age group. This is a job well done by all participants.