



MRC In Touch

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

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Featured Article

An Annual Tradition: New Mexico and West Texas MRC Volunteers Provide Medical Care During the Annual Bataan Memorial Death March

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The Annual Bataan Memorial Death March happens every year, on the third Sunday in March, at the remote White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico. This grueling 26.2 mile event takes marchers through the hot and rugged desert terrain to commemorate the World War II heroes who were captured and forced to march to prisoner of war camps by Japanese forces in April 1942. Some of the members seized and forced to march were from the 200th Coast Artillery, New Mexico National Guard, Army, Army Air Corps, Navy, Marines, and the Philippines.

Today, participants march in this commemorative event for many reasons: personal challenge, the spirit of competition, to honor a family member or particular veteran, or to honor those that were captured and killed by the Japanese in the Bataan Peninsula. The event also serves as an annual fundraiser, collecting food for area food banks. Yearly, the number of participants varies between 5,000 and 7,000 and with 2017 being the 75th anniversary, just over 7,200 marchers participated in this year's event. The fastest marcher this year completed the course in 4 hours 49 minutes and the last marcher — an amputee wounded warrior — finished in 14 hours 8 minutes.



The likelihood that a marcher will need medical attention at some point during this event is extremely high, particularly with the course's rugged terrain, high altitude, and extreme heat. In years past, up to 27% of the marchers sought medical care — ranging from blister care, to dehydration, to orthopedic issues, to cardiac events.

Volunteers are a critical part of the medical team, which joins forces with the active duty military to provide participants the care they need. This year, approximately 120 medical volunteers — including 56 New Mexico MRC and 8 West Texas MRC volunteers — were part of the medical team that staffed six of the course's medical tents, as well as the main medical facility located at the finish line. The main medical facility consisted of multiple Mobile Medical Units and established five separate treatment areas for various patient conditions. The main medical facility also had an Ambulance Bus (AMBUS) onsite, which holds up to 20 patients for treatment and transport, if

needed. Other organizations and individuals that joined the MRC volunteers in providing care included the University of New Mexico University Healthcare Emergency Response Team (UHERT), which is the volunteer NM State Medical and Response Team; Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members; BorderRAC and all Texas Emergency Medical Task Force units; and volunteers from disaster teams in Arizona, Colorado, Texas, Utah, Oregon, Florida, Arkansas, and Oklahoma.

The volunteers – many who faced challenges of their own, including providing medical care in austere conditions, working long hours on little sleep, and learning to work with new partners on the spot – were able to treat roughly 1,500 marchers throughout the course. This included numerous ground transports and three simultaneous air evacuation transports.

CDR Skip Payne, Deputy Director of the Medical Reserve Corps, was excited to be able to attend this year's event and provide medical care beside his MRC colleagues and partners. "I was in awe," he said of his experience. "It was an amazing opportunity to witness the power of volunteerism, the dedication of individuals, and to honor the memories of those who originally marched in the Bataan Peninsula."

The MRC teams and their partners are already looking at the lessons learned from 2017 and planning for the 29th Annual Bataan Memorial Death March on March 18, 2018. Next year will mark the 8th year for the New Mexico MRC and the 6th year for the West Texas MRC participating in this event. Don't hesitate to reach out if you're interested in joining them!

MRC/NACCHO Connections

Get Involved: The Bob Cohen MRC Mentorship Program

NACCHO, in collaboration with the MRC Program and the NACCHO MRC Workgroup, is currently accepting applications for new MRC Unit Leaders and interested mentors to participate in the 2017 Bob Cohen MRC Mentorship Program.

The Bob Cohen Mentorship Program is designed to support new MRC Unit Leaders, with less than two years of experience, seeking guidance through a collaborative and supportive environment by building one-on-one mentorship relationships with experienced MRC Unit Leaders. To complete the application, please click [here](#). Additional program details, including eligibility information and responsibilities, can be found on the [Bob Cohen MRC Mentorship Webpage](#).

For more information or questions about the Bob Cohen MRC Mentorship program, please email the NACCHO MRC Team at mrc@naccho.org.



Reminder: Advisory Groups

NACCHO's advisory groups are a primary and recognized vehicle for identifying the opportunities and challenges facing local health departments (LHDs) and the field at large. NACCHO members from all areas of public health come together to explore the many facets of the field and help NACCHO make the best decisions in serving its members, and local public health.

NACCHO will accept applications for the 2017 advisory groups and committees through Friday, May 5. NACCHO invites LHD leaders and their staff to apply to help inform and guide NACCHO's projects. Lead by sharing your

talents and expertise.

For more information about NACCHO's advisory groups, email advisorygroups@naccho.org.

Here is the link to the page for all advisory groups and vacancies: <http://www.naccho.org/membership/advisory-groups>



The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to be a leader, partner, catalyst, and voice with local health departments.

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Please contact Alyson Jordan, NACCHO's MRC Communications Specialist, with any questions or suggestions for the newsletter at 202-783-5528 or at ajordan@naccho.org.