BY HELEN KAVERMAN



What is Tough Mudder? Who are Tough Mudders?

Tough Mudders is an event, a 10 - 12 obstacle course, with unbelievable obstacles. A Tough Mudder is a guy (or gal) who participates in these challenging events. Why do they do it? They want to prove how tough they are and in doing so they raise funds for Wounded Warriors.

It calls for teamwork. Participants are asked to join in reciting the Tough Mudder Pledge before starting each event: It goes like this: "As a Tough Mudder I Pledge That: I understand that Tough Mudder is not a race, but a challenge. I put teamwork and camaraderie before my course time. I do not whine – kids whine. I help my fellow Mudders complete the course. I overcome all fears.

Over 700,000 have participated in these world wide events, which have raised more than five million dollars for the Wounded Warrior Project. The Tough Mudders consider a 26 mile marathon boring. A Mudder runs, crawls, climbs for 10 – 12 miles. The obstacles have such names as: Arctic Enema, Berlin Walls, Braveheart, Cliffhanger, Dirty Ballerina, Electroshock Therapy, Funky Monkey, Greased Lightning, Log Bog Jog, Spider's Web, Devil's Beard, Kiss Of Mud, Hangin' Tough and Mud Mile. The course is extremely muddy, as the event name would

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imply. The obstacle courses were designed by British Special Forces to test the all around strength, stamina, mental grit and camaraderie of the many participants, world wide. To get over 12 foot walls and through underground mud tunnels, a mudder needs teammates to give him/ or her a boost and a push. Tough Mudders are expected to uphold these ideals and exhibit teamwork and camaraderie both on the course and off it.

My grandson, Steve Dickman of Dublin, formerly of Fort Jennings has participated in two of these events. Several other young men, natives of Fort Jennings took part in this event at Mansfield a couple weeks ago. They were: David Smith, Matt Burgei and Alex Maag of the Class of 2006 and Nick Schimmoeller and Jim Buettner of the Class of 2005

Steve Dickman spent four years in the U. S. Navy on the sub, USS Toledo. Now, he and his wife Amanda, have two children, Emma and Owen. They both teach in the Dublin School System.

Steve expressed his heart felt feelings – why he is a Tough Mudder as follows:

Why I do Tough Mudder

"This year I was on Team Good Clean Fun. Many of my teammates experienced their first Mudder in Mansfield. I remember when they were thinking about committing to run in the event. They weren't sure... they were experiencing some intimidation and were worried about getting injured. Let's just say that they found their fighting spirit. They now have an increased appreciation of what our service men and women do every day.

"This country has thousands of men and women who are suffering. The Wounded Warrior Project makes sure they are not forgotten. The WWP makes sure they are taken care of when they get home.

"When I got out of the Navy, it was a bittersweet moment. I was excited that I was going to going back to Ohio to be with my family. I missed them everyday I was away. When I watched the USS Toledo head out for the last time, it was a sad moment for me. I realized that I might

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not see my brothers again. I had their back and they had mine. I know I had my family to go home to, but I had no idea what my new life was going to look like. I struggled trying to adjust when I finished my enlistment. I had little tolerance for others....it was tough. When 9/11 happened I was angry and I remember making a phone call and telling the other end that I wanted to go back. For a long time I felt like I was giving up my brothers. I wanted to be with them, but my Mom taught me a very important lesson...she said 'You can't make decisions when you're angry.' So I spent the next few years trying to understand the decisions I made.

"Post-traumatic stress disorder is a type of anxiety disorder. It can occur after you've seen or experienced a traumatic event that involved threat of injury or death. Many of our service men and women, just need someone to talk to. They need to know we are here to support them. It's because of them, that we are here.

"I do the Tough Mudder because it's my way of knowing that I have my brothers and sisters backs. When people learn about the Electro-shock Therapy obstacle, they ask why I want to do that. I tell them it's for our Wounded Warriors.....I do it because men and women are getting shot at right now. There are men and women who are missing their loved ones with the thought of never seeing them again. We need to show our Veterans that we are here and we love them. Thinking about what they are dealing with now, makes running 10-12 miles and getting shocked in the mud not so bad. Mudder Nation supports our Warriors! We do it, because Warriors are doing it! It's all about the camaraderie.

"People think that PTSD only happens in war...it's an epidemic and happens all the time. When you see a Veteran wearing their colors, say 'Thank you!' Shake their hand. You'll be glad you did and they will be, too.

"If anyone would like to do Tough Mudder, visit www.toughmudder.com. You will be glad you did. So will our Men and Women.

"Hoorah"

Steve

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Seven young men and one woman from the Ottawa – Glandorf area also too part in the event at Mansfield. They were: Brian Heringhaus, AJ Lammers, Doug Kimmet, Eric Blankemeyer, Matt Hanneman, Jeff Larger, Colleen Palte and Bart Lammers.

Kimmet (his family originated in Delphos) summed up his feeling in this manner:

"This event is definitely a team effort rather than an individual effort. As a team, we helped each other make it through all of the obstacles and finish the race. The course was very difficult but that made finishing it that much more gratifying."

He suggested that those who are interested look up the web site

The Wounded Warriors need our prayers and support. Thank you to all veterans!