

2-24-2011

02/24/2011 - Student Veterans Accepting Donations To Participate In Bataan Memorial Death March.pdf

University Marketing and Communications

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases_2011

Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "02/24/2011 - Student Veterans Accepting Donations To Participate In Bataan Memorial Death March.pdf" (2011). 2011. 19.
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases_2011/19

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Press Releases at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in 2011 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

Student Veterans Group Accepting Donations to Participate in Bataan Memorial Death March

Feb-24-2011

Michael Ruybal is getting off to a running start as Eastern Illinois University's newly hired veterans coordinator.

Or, maybe, one might say he's getting off to a "marching" start.

Little more than a month after his arrival on the Charleston campus, Ruybal and five EIU student veterans are in training to participate in the [Bataan Memorial Death March](#), held annually on the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico.

The event, which began in 1989, honors a group of World War II heroes who were responsible for the defense of the islands of Luzon, Corregidor and the harbor defense forts of the Philippines. On April 9, 1942, tens of thousands of Americans and Filipino soldiers were surrendered to Japanese forces, and were forced to march for days in the scorching heat through the Philippine jungles. Thousands died.

Since its inception, the Bataan Memorial Death March has grown from about 100 to some 5,200 participants from across the United States and several foreign countries.

Some participate in the full 26.2-mile march; others participate in a smaller, less intense 15-mile version.

Ruybal and his team plan to participate in the 26.2 mile march, set to take place March 27.

"I'm hoping our participation will build esprit de corps' within the organization, as well as within the veterans program here at Eastern," Ruybal said. "The event builds team work, collaboration and personal pride, along with self accomplishment for the individuals.

"It is a well established programmatic activity for veterans to take part of, in remembering those who came before us and, in some cases, make the ultimate sacrifice for this nation.

"And by representing EIU, participation in this march will build a sense of ownership for our students who want to do more, as well as be a solid recruiting tool for the institution," Ruybal added. "The more people who see the Panther Pride, the more that image stays in their mind of the university that participates in the event - a university that wears its colors with pride and does so with honor."

This year, Eastern will have double representation. The EIU ROTC battalion is also sending a team.

"The team is not finalized," said Lt. Col. Stephen Knotts, chairman of the Military Science Department. "The cadets are having a competition, and the best five will get to go."

Ruybal and his team are currently in the process of raising the \$4,500 it will take to get their six individuals to New Mexico and pay for room and board costs (including a \$275 team registration fee). Anyone wishing to contribute may do so by sending a check made payable to the Student Veterans of Eastern, care of the Financial Aid Office, Eastern Illinois University, 600 Lincoln Ave., Charleston, IL 61920.



Student veterans from Eastern Illinois University planning to participate in the March 27 Bataan Memorial Death March are, from left to right, first row, Nicholas Anson and James Wallace; second row, Katie Frantik, Nathen Camp, Michael Ruybal (adviser) and John Mefford.