



– October 25, 2009

### Summary

Great organization... Great weather... Great experience... Great race!

### Details

I have wanted to run the Marine Corps Marathon for quite some time. When I was in the Army (mid '80s), after I completed the Army 10 Miler I set my sights on the Marine Corps Marathon but never ran it due to a plantar fasciitis injury. 23 years later I finally made it. Whoo Hoo.

The weather when we arrived was a little warm, a little humid and threatening of rain, but the forecast was for all that to move through Saturday night, and for a cool front to arrive just in time for the marathon on Sunday morning. The forecasters were right. The temperature at the start of the race was about 51 degrees and it only warmed up 5-6 degrees during the duration of my run. Great marathon weather.

I left the hotel about 5:15 a.m. Sunday morning, walked to the Metro, and got off at the Pentagon stop. A mile walk in the dark got me to the Athlete's Village at the Pentagon's north parking lot. I staked out a spot under the tent and relaxed for awhile. At about 7:00 a.m. I began my preparation to head to the start line (which was about a ½ mile walk from the Athlete's Village). I removed my warm-ups, put them in my drop bag and deposited my bag at the UPS bag drop. After navigating through thousands of runners, I wound up at the corral I wanted to be in. I phoned Mitzie so I could try and locate her. Success... I was able to see her on the hill by the bridge close to the start line. After a few words from Sen. Pat Leahy and Montel Williams, the cannon fired and the marathon began.

My race plan was simple, run controlled through the first 3 or so miles (all up hill) and then pick up the pace until the inevitable crash, then hold on until the finish (hoping the crash came closer to the finish than to the beginning). I started slow, picked up my pace and settled into a rhythm. This worked until about mile 20 when I started to feel my muscles begin to tighten. I slowed down, shortened my stride and was doing okay until around mile 24 when I could feel my calves and quads begin to cramp. I slowed down a little more and was okay until the final ½ mile when my right hamstring REALLY began to cramp. Hamstrings are funny things. I have found I can run through cramps in the other muscles of my legs, but not through hamstring cramps. On any given stride, the hamstring can knot up and render you motionless. Since I found that out the hard way at the Country Music Marathon in 2004, I thought it would be a good idea to stop and stretch my hamstring before making the last ½ mile up-hill to the finish. The stretching worked and I finished with no embarrassing "fall to the road in agony, screaming like a little girl" episode. Only I knew I was but one stride away from humiliation. My mile splits were as follows (note: my Garmin recorded 26.51 miles, so that is how my splits are listed):

1 – 7:41	10 – 6:50	19 – 7:09	Total – 3:16:43
2 – 7:39	11 – 6:58	20 – 7:43 (cramp twinges)	
3 – 7:26	12 – 6:56	21 – 7:29	
4 – 6:49	13 – 7:03	22 – 7:51	
5 – 7:03	14 – 6:58	23 – 7:49	
6 – 7:04	15 – 7:05	24 – 8:23 (real cramps)	
7 – 7:20 (potty stop)	16 – 7:09	25 – 8:24	
8 – 6:55	17 – 7:11	26 – 8:54	
9 – 6:57	18 – 7:07	.51 – 4:37 (stopped to stretch)	

Because of the course layout, Mitzie was able to see me at several different places on the course, which was pretty cool. I am so glad we got to go and experience the Marine Corps Marathon. The setting, the race participants, and most importantly, the young Marines facilitating the race make this one of my favorite marathon experiences to date. Semper Fi.

Terry