ROTC Cadets honor Bataan

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Some WKU ROTC cadets are training for one of their most difficult drills yet, a 26.2 mile marathon in the middle of the desert.

Amy Bingham has more in this week’s View from the Hill.

The actual Bataan Death March occurred during World War II and impacted thousands of service men and women. This is the 25th year a memorial march has been held and members of WKU’s ROTC program will be part of it.

Kelsey McArthur \ Jr., St. Louis

Bo Haun \ Jr., LaRue County

 Andrew Black \ Assistant Military Science Instructor

 “Just right from the get go you’re hurting, you’re sweating…ugh why am I doing this but in the end it’s wow, look what I’ve accomplished.”

For the past few months, this has been the scene at Diddle Arena, at 6 am on Mondays and Fridays.

 “A lot of stairs, I haven’t run so many stairs in my life.”

With 45 pound weights in their backpack, these ROTC members are training for a grueling marathon in the desert.

 “The sand, the heat, the wind, the physical pain the mental, it’s all gonna be bad but we’ll be together, we’ll push each other.”

The memorial death march pays homage to those involved in the actual death

march.

During World War II, 70 thousand service men and women were captured by Japanese forces and forced to march through 70 miles of Phillippine jungle with very little to eat or drink.

 “Not only the event but the military history behind it is just incredible.”

Assistant professor Andrew Black took part in the memorial march last year.

 “I’ve got kind of a military bucket list, things I want to accomplish and do while I’m in the military and this was one of them.”

Black says the march has even more significance now that he knows a National Guard unit from Harrodsburg Kentucky was among those captured.

 “They were part of the battle and the fall, some were in captivity for three and half years…only 37 came home.”

These cadets jumped at the chance to join Black in honoring the fallen heroes and he says they will come away with an unforgettable experience.

 “These cadets, they’re gonna have a huge story to go and spread, not only amongst the unit, amongst other cadets but across campus.”

The Bataan Memorial Death March takes place March 23rd in New Mexico. Black, along with eight cadets from WKU ROTC will participate in the 26.2 mile marathon over rugged terrain carrying a 35 pound backpack.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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