



### **Army Ten-Miler: Running for Fallen Soldiers**

Every single person on that 10-mile course has a reason for running.

Some do it for the love of the race.

Others do it for the exercise.

Some do it to show their support for the Army.

While still others want to prove to themselves they can conquer a 10-mile course.



And then there are the runners like Julia Jutras.

And Eric Herzberg.  
They run because their children can't.

Jutras lost her son, PFC Dillon Jutras, in 2005 when his Ranger unit was clearing out a building in Iraq's volatile Anbar Province. His team leader was shot by enemy fire and when Jutras went back to save him he was shot and killed too.

Herzberg lost his son, Marine Lance Corporal Eric Herzberg, who was also in the Anbar Province, in 2006. He had finished his duties for the day and had volunteered to do an extra patrol when he was shot and killed by enemy fire.

Both parents have been running the Army Ten-Miler ever since as a way to honor their fallen sons and heroes.

“The intensity of the pain is so indescribable really,” said Herzberg, who served in the Army as a young man, and uses the Army Ten-Miler as a warm-up to the Marine Corps Marathon. “The only thing that’s for sure is you have to make a choice what to do with it and you’ve got to either numb it or use it as fuel. Those are the only two options you have. That’s why a lot of people, when they have a loss that’s this severe they go the other way and try to numb it in an unhealthy way. I didn’t want to go that road, so to me it’s not only (that running) is fueled by the emotion, but it’s the way that I grieve. It’s my therapy.”

The Army Ten-Miler works as an outlet for Jutras and her family as well.

# ARMY TEN-MILER

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She first ran the race *with* Dillon, and her husband, Ltc. Pierre Jutras, and daughter, Heather, in 2003. The family had just moved to the area for Ltc. Jutras, who had served many years in Special Forces in the field, and is now stationed at the Pentagon.

“I don’t know who said it but someone said ‘Let’s run it.’ And we all started training for it.”

That would be the first and last time they would run it as a family. Dillon enlisted shortly thereafter. He was deployed to Iraq in the summer of 2005 with the Army's 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, from Fort Benning, Georgia.

He was shot and killed that October, right after his family ran the 2005 Army Ten-Miler.

“It’s changed everything. Nothing is not changed,” said Jutras of life without Dillon. “Because even when something good is happening, you think ‘Well, if Dillon was here this would be awesome.’ It’s almost awesome, but not quite.”



But like Herzberg, the Jutras family quickly realized they wanted to do something that would let them honor Dillon and help them deal with their pain.

“At Christmas, we all got together and of course I thought it was a horrible Christmas... We’re all sitting there and I’m really close to my brothers and sisters and we’re just sitting there feeling like ‘What can we do, what can we do?’ And my brother Kevin – he’s a really big guy, said ‘I’m going to run in Dillon’s place for the Army Ten-Miler. I’m thinking Riiiiiiight.’”

But run it he did, along with his wife and daughter, and, of course, Jutras, Pierre and Heather...all clad in t-shirts with Dillon’s picture.

“People say there’s nothing you can do (when someone dies), but there’s a lot you can do,” said Jutras. “You might not ever really fix what you’re trying to fix, but it will help you move on... So many people came up to me (during the race) and put their arm around me and said ‘Way to go Mom’ and made different comments like that and I think that’s what gets you through.”

With each passing year, the Jutras family has added more people to their band of runners. Jutras expects 23 people, including family, friends and co-workers, to run the race this year.



They also bring their own personal cheering section. Each year, about 30 people, including Jutras' sons Hunter and Dustin, who aren't quite old enough to run the race yet, stand out on the corner of 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Independence Avenue waving American flags and cheering the race contingent on.

But it's their fallen sons, that really get them through the 10 miles, said both Jutras and Herzberg.

"For about the last two miles I was really thinking about stopping and walking and I had never done that in a training run or race ever," said Herzberg of last year's Army Ten-Miler. "But I really felt Eric's voice saying 'You can do this.' It's a matter of will right now. A matter of mind ruling over your body...(And when I crossed the finish line) I had a sense of relief that I made it and just pointed to the sky and thanked my son."