

BoG Member Issues

Walking Challenge

By Sheila Pursglove

A member of the Chickasaw Tribe in Oklahoma nicknamed Col. Dale Newell “Chief Walk-A-Lot” — and the 82-year-old certainly lives up to that moniker, with over 2 million steps taken in the past six months and a goal of 4 million by year’s end.

“I’m of German descent — but I live in Chickasaw country, and I mentioned my walking campaign to a native friend. He said in the tribes that would generate a name — and we concocted Walk-a-Lot,” Newell said with a smile.

As part of Civil Air Patrol’s new wellness initiative, the CAP Board of Governors member is challenging cadets and senior members to best his step count over the 12 months preceding next year’s National Conference. Those matching or exceeding his achievement will receive a certificate and public recognition through CAP media outlets.

Newell, previously a commander of both the Washington and Oklahoma wings and assistant inspector general for investigations at CAP National Headquarters, started an intensive fitness campaign after triple bypass heart surgery in July 2018.

“I’ve always been physically active, but when I got to my



Col. Dale Newell, a member of CAP’s Board of Governors, walks on the treadmill. This exercise regimen has helped him rehab from his triple bypass heart surgery over a year ago. At the National Conference, he challenged other CAP members to best his step count over the next 12 months.

mid-70s, I started to slack off,” he said. “I experienced a gradual loss of energy, but attributed it to just getting old.”

Newell’s cardiac rehab regimen consisted of a treadmill, a stationary bicycle and a cranking machine.

“Like the me of old, I aggressively pursued my rehab,” he said. “About 30 days into the three-month rehab program, I did 60 minutes on the treadmill covering over 4 miles, just to prove to myself I could still do it. That incentivized me to continue to push my rehab — I found out I wasn’t getting old, just lazy.”



In cooler weather, Newell starts his day walking down his street and three cul-de-sacs, covering slightly over a mile. On hot days he uses the indoor track at the YMCA, where he also works out three times a week.

Workouts are patterned after the cardiac rehab program, but instead of a stationary bicycle and a cranking machine he uses a recumbent elliptical bicycle with handlebars that, at high resistance levels, provides superior upper body, arm, leg and endurance training. He follows that with 1.5 miles on a treadmill at a 15-minute-per-mile pace, then totals 1-3 miles on the indoor track to achieve his daily total. He passes the time by listening to iHeart radio.

After buying a Fitbit watch in

January, on the company website Newell read an article, "10,000 Steps," about a Japanese program. "The gist was if you walk 10,000 steps a day, your calorie burn will equal your calorie intake," he said. "I was intrigued. So I started to work on 10,000 steps a day, and it became my motivation. On average I do 77,000 steps a week.

"I've shed 25 pounds since my pre-heart attack weight and I feel like I did in my early 60s. I also don't smoke or drink alcohol. I like feeling this way, and as long as the guy upstairs is willing to keep me around, I will keep my physical fitness as a top priority."

Newell, a Vietnam veteran who joined CAP after his retirement from the Army National Guard in June 1992, notes that 10,000 steps a day

equals 3.65 million steps a year, and 11,000 steps over 365 days equals 4.015 million steps annually.

"That was the genesis of my goal of 4 million steps a year," he said. "When I was told of CAP's wellness campaign of 'Walking to Mars,' I got the idea of challenging the force to follow in the steps of an 82-year-old post-cardiac bypass surgery BoG member."

Newell, who presented his challenge at the CAP National Conference in Baltimore, said the Walk to Mars initiative provides tremendous group motivation.

"It does take time and dedication, and not all our members can accomplish that many steps. But if everyone gets on board the vessel, 34 million miles is achievable." ▲

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