

Marine Corps Marathon and Cigna Present the Military Match Program

Program will pair civilian runners with military members for virtual MCM events

QUANTICO, VA (September 9, 2020) – [The Marine Corps Marathon](#) (MCM) and Cigna, a proud MCM sponsor, introduce the Military Match Program for this year’s virtual MCM Weekend events.

A unique and truly meaningful component of the MCM is the opportunity for runners to interact with Marines. In addition to numerous selfie moments at the MCM, runners recall the tremendous energy boost Marines provide through vocal encouragement often in the form of hard chargin’ barking.

For many, the commitment to run the MCM is to demonstrate appreciation for our service men and women, to dedicate the run to a loved one who is currently in uniform or to honor the memory of someone special lost while serving. Whether guiding an athlete through the streets of D.C. like in past years or sharing that experience with them virtually, those moments shared with a Marine, forming even the briefest of connections, can have a meaningful impact on runners. And for those in the military, the opportunity to run alongside civilians in a show of solidarity and fellowship has added importance to the experience.

To cultivate these powerful interactions between civilians and military members, “The People’s Marathon” and Cigna joined together to introduce the Military Match Program for runners participating in the virtual [MCM](#), [MCM50K](#) and [MCM10K](#). By signing up for this free program, civilian runners will be paired with runners who have served or are currently serving in the military to communicate directly, motivate each other through these final weeks of training and to provide support for the virtual run.

In recent years, Cigna executives have participated in the MCM running alongside wounded veterans. Now, this type of personal engagement is possible for all runners.

“The role of a running guide is to encourage, uplift and support our assigned athlete physically, mentally and emotionally,” said Julia Huggins, Cigna senior vice president, who is returning in 2020 as one of Cigna’s Marine Corps Marathon executive sponsors. “We are excited to be part of this event and help these athletes reach their goals. This is just one way Cigna proudly supports our active military members and veterans.”

Those registered for any of the virtual MCM Weekend events may opt into the free Military Match program presented by Cigna by signing up through their Haku registration account and indicating if they are ‘civilian’ or ‘military.’ By opting into the MCM Military Match, runners consent to allow the MCM Organization to share an email address with another runner for the express purpose of supporting participation in this program.

For the Semper 5ive earlier this year, [Brett Steele, a Marine stationed in Okinawa, Japan, ran with 60-year-old Patty Campbell, who lives in New York](#). The two scheduled their virtual run amidst wind gusts and snow squalls for her and in 70° weather for him, kicking things off with a FaceTime call to get each other hyped.

“It was amazing! Knowing that he was running with me from half-way around the world gave me motivation and energy to complete the run,” said Campbell. “I ended up running my personal best five-mile run ever.”

Campbell continued that Steele even said this invitation inspired him to work on his training. “He thanked me for inspiring him when it was really the opposite.”

Military Match participants will be encouraged to share their special interactions on social media using hashtags #RunWithTheMarines and #VirtuallyUnstoppable.

Entries are still available for the [45th MCM](#), [MCM50K](#), [MCM10K](#) and [Semper Fun Mile](#). Participants now have more time to complete their virtual runs as the eligible date has been moved back to September 27 from October 1. In addition to marking its 45th anniversary, this year’s MCM commemorates the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima by featuring actual volcanic ash collected at that site within the event medal.

For media information please contact Jheanel Walters, Marine Corps Marathon Public Relations Coordinator at 703-987-3191 or Jheanel.Walters@usmc-mccs.org.

The Marine Corps Marathon (MCM) is one of the largest marathons in world. Recognized as “Best Marathon in the Mid Atlantic,” and the “Best Marathon for Charities,” the MCM honors honor, courage and commitment of its participants. Also known as “The People’s Marathon,” runners from all 50 states and more than 50 countries participate in the MCM, the largest marathon not to offer prize money. No federal or Marine Corps endorsement is implied. Connect with the Marine Corps Marathon on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [Flickr](#). #RunWithTheMarines