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Local Runner Breaks the Tape for the Fifth Time in 2019 at MCM Turkey Trot *More than 300 runners recognized as 2019 Distinguished Participants*

QUANTICO, VA (November 23, 2019) – More than 900 runners and their families gathered aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico this morning for the Turkey Trot 10K and Mile, one final calorie-burning event before Thanksgiving.

Matt O’Neil of Woodbridge, VA crossed the finish line first with a time of 32:51, earning his fifth first place finish for the year. O’Neil was the overall winner at the 17.75K in March, the Devil Dog Double in May, the Belleau Wood 8K in June and the Quantico 12K in August.

“It’s something I would have never thought, but I challenged myself at the beginning of the year to come out to every one of these races and give it everything I’ve got,” said the 24-year-old who also qualified for his first Distinguished Participant medal and currently holds the course record for Belleau Wood 8K (25:45), Quantico 12K (40:17) and last year’s inaugural Medal of Honor 8K (27:26).

In addition to his impressive five-peat accomplishment, O’Neil also secured the third place finish at the 44th Marine Corps Marathon in October clocking in at 2:31:30. “The goal was top three and while there were some dark moments when I didn’t think that was going to happen, I hung tough and stayed strong. I had a lot of motivation to complete that race.”

Justin Polcha, 16, from Stafford, VA ran his first 10K today in 34:43, crossing the finish line in second place less than two minutes behind O’Neil. “I’m used to shorter distances like 5Ks, but I did my standard training and that paid off. It felt good.”

The first female finisher to break the tape was 28-year-old Emily Sharp with a time of 40:33. “As a military brat, I really love running these races. It’s fun to be out with the military family and celebrate the little things.”

Rounding out the top finishers for this year’s event are Jonathan Ladson, 28, from Woodbridge, VA, who placed third among males with 35:18, Lindsey Slyman, 33, from Annapolis, MD with 42:41 and Catherine Miller, 53, from Spotsylvania, VA with 43:25, placing second and third among females respectively.

Among today’s finishers are the Distinguished Participants who completed their final 2019 MCM Event Series run to earn the coveted medal. More than 300 runners walked away with this exclusive recognition this year, having participated in the Historic Half Weekend in May; Belleau Wood 8K, Run Amuck, Recon Ruck or the Crossroads Challenge in June; Quantico Tri or Quantico 12K in August; and finally the Turkey Trot 10K today. The Distinguished Participant medals were presented by VA Runner, a running specialty store in Woodbridge and Fredericksburg. Runners aiming to earn the Distinguished Participant medal in 2020 [can now register](#) for any four qualifying events in a single transaction.

For Michael Hulett, the medal is a personal victory and a reminder of how far he’s come in the last 18 months since having major foot surgery. “Today was probably my fastest 10K in over four years. It’s been a great year for me and I had a lot fun doing the event series.”



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Hulett, 53, from Woodbridge, VA finished the Turkey Trot 10K with a time of 37:36, snagging first place for his age group. He shared the spotlight with 12-year-old daughter, Kelsey Hulett who was the first place overall finisher for the one-mile run.

“Turkey Trot has become a tradition for our entire family. We love the support at these events, the organization that goes into it, and everything the Marines do.”

Event festivities included a petting zoo featuring llamas, goats, mini horses, ponies, rabbits, and turkeys. All participants received a unique Thanksgiving Turkey Trot shirt and a pair of #RunWithTheMarines gloves. Top finishers and age-award winners received frozen Thanksgiving turkeys provided by sponsor Wegmans.

Unofficial results are available at www.marinemarathon.com. Runners may continue their commitment to running with the Marines by participating in the 2019 Medal of Honor 8K on December 7.

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

Turkey Trot is part of the MCM Event Series hosted by the Marine Corps Marathon Organization. The MCM Event Series feature a variety of distances and fun challenges on or near Marine Corps Base Quantico. No federal or Marine Corps endorsement is implied. Connect with the Marine Corps Marathon on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [Flickr](#). #RunWithTheMarines