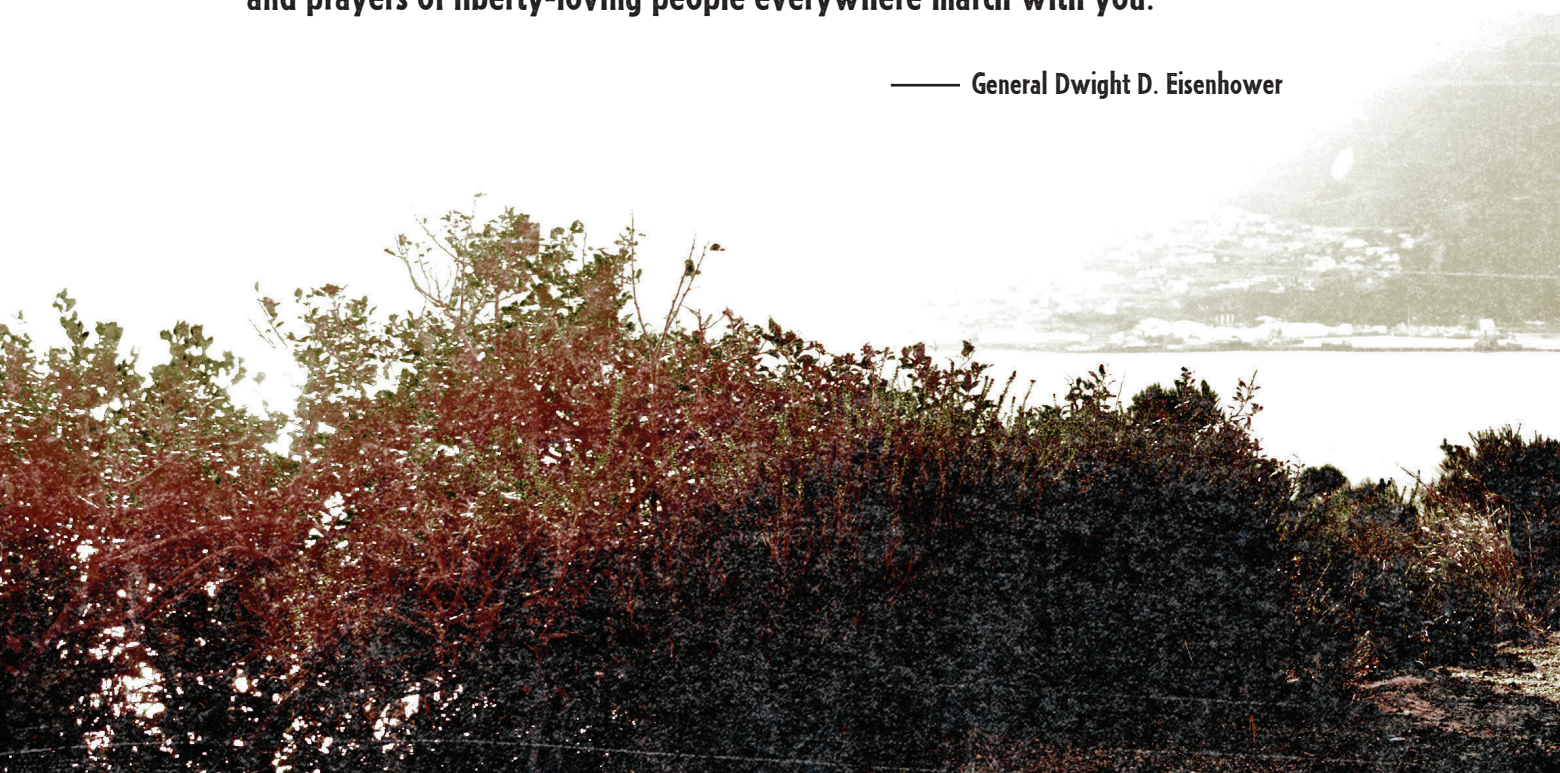


WHAT I'VE LEARNED ABOUT COURT REPORTING FROM ENDURANCE RACING PART 1

By Anthony Frisolone

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hope and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you.

—— General Dwight D. Eisenhower

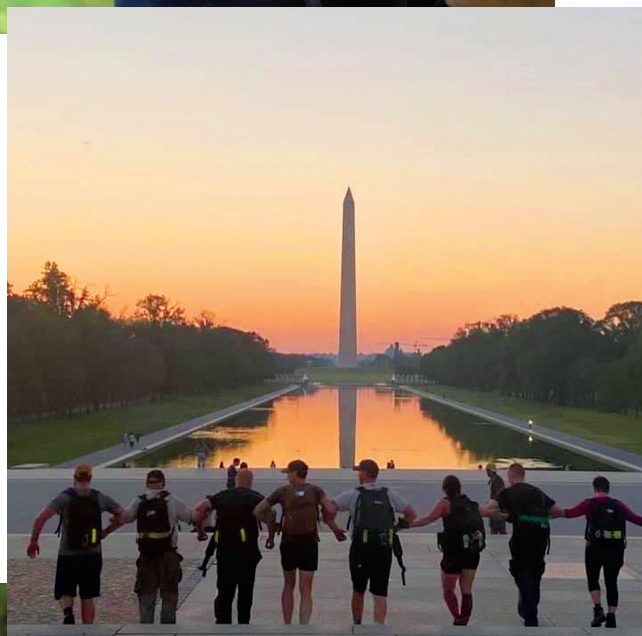
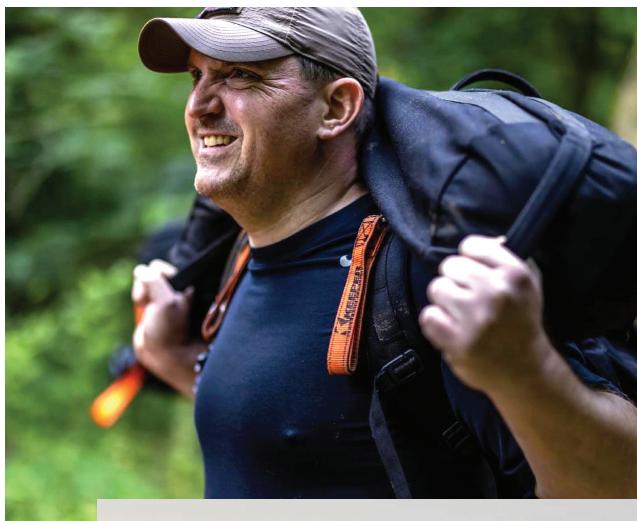


In late 2015, a friend of mine from my gym said: “Let’s sign up for a Spartan race.” So, in 2016, I ran my first Spartan race, and he didn’t. Despite this, we’re still friends.

After that first Spartan race, I became more interested in obstacle course and endurance racing. I had done 5k and 10k races and they were a nice challenge on my physical fitness journey, but I was looking for a bigger challenge.

In late 2016, I found GORUCK, a company founded by Jason McCarthy, a member of the 10th Special Forces Group, after he had left service. He had seen action in Afghanistan and Iraq. GORUCK started out as a backpack company and grew into a company that runs endurance events in the United States, Europe, and Japan. They are challenging both physically and mentally.

Through these events and the people who lead them, I have learned many leadership lessons. The cadre are also current and former members of the U.S. Special Operations community; e.g., Army Rangers, Marine Reconnaissance, Navy SEALs, and Air Force Pararescue. They’re all highly decorated and highly trained in various skills. The lessons and skills taught at these events over the last four years have been valuable for me.



Photos courtesy of GORUCK HQ

The last time I wrote for this series (September 2019, “GORUCK, 9/11, Endurance, Sacrifices, Adventures, and Teamwork”), I was floating off the coast of Breezy Point, Queens, N.Y., with 30 other people and three former or current members of the Marine Corps’ elite Force Reconnaissance unit, learning how to survive in the water for prolonged periods of time and performing various tasks while in the water. Three years has passed since that July day, and rucking — walking with a backpack weighing as much as 50

pounds — is still part of my fitness journey. With every event, I learn more about my own limitations and resilience, and many of the lessons I’ve learned I can relate to my work as a court reporter and even pass on to the students I work with.

In some respects, 2020 was a blessing in disguise.

I found myself home with a lot of free time: No commute, and my courtroom work was all remote combined with a light schedule. I decided that this was an opportunity of get into great shape for upcoming races and endurance events. I had already joined an online training program in January 2020 specifically for weight training with a focus on rucking. Our sole focus was rucking and ruck-based physical training. Then the pandemic happened. To fill my time, I’d get up at my usual 5:30 a.m., workout for an hour, and then ruck two to five miles a day. Sometimes I’d go out again in the afternoon after work to fill my time if transcripts weren’t pending.

I was left with a “What now?” feeling. I was training hard and seeing results, and I felt great mentally and physically. From March to July 2020, my training was spent in solitude since there aren’t many people who know about or are into rucking on Staten Island, N.Y., and all the gyms were closed. I was used to the camaraderie of being part of both a gym and being a member of the rucking community; this solitude was getting to me. I finally attended my first GORUCK event since February 2020 in July 2020. I went

to Philadelphia for the 4th of July Tough, a 12-hour endurance event led by a former member of military special operations. We learned about the events leading up to declaring our independence and visited historic sites in the area. We also engaged in team-building exercises, land navigation, and physical training throughout the night. But nothing was cooler than being in front of Independence Hall on the morning of July 4th, talking about what it must have been like that day more than 245 years ago.

As the summer wore on, I kept training and hoping life would go back to normal, which, as we all know, it didn’t. I continued to rely on my fitness routine to keep me sharp mentally and physically, and it acted as a stress and anxiety reliever from what was going on in the world.

My next GORUCK event was the day of the Ranger Double Tough in Alexandria, Va. This event started the night of October 2nd to the morning of October 5th, 2020. It was two 12-plus-hour events based on the events of the Battle of Mogadishu, better known as the Black Hawk Down incident. The second leg of the event tracked the 18-hour timeline of the battle. This event was led by three men, two Army Rangers and one Delta Force operator, who were there on October 3-4, 1993, the level of detail these three heroes went into about their experiences during those two days in October 1993 outshined what book or a movie could ever tell me.

I also saw how the training I was doing paid off. Back-to-back 12-hour endurance events with only a three-hour break in between are a test of mental and physical resolve.

A friend of mine said to me: “Ant, you leveled up this weekend. When are you going for your bolts?” The bolts refer to the coveted GORUCK triple lightning bolts patch you can earn after doing what is called an HTB (Heavy, Tough, Basic). The HTB is a 24-hour, 12-hour, and a 6-hour GORUCK back-to-back-to-back event — a 48-hour test of mental and physical endurance. To be honest, I felt confident; all I had to do was find out when one would be happening.

In late December, the 2021 event calendar showed the first HTB of the year would be in June in Washington, D.C., to commemorate the 77th anniversary of the D-Day invasion of Normandy, France, in World War II. “There’s my new goal!” I thought. (I’ll tell you more about the HTB next month.)

**I was used to the camaraderie
of being part of both a gym
and being a member of the
rucking community; this
solitude was getting to me.**

GORUCK IS LIKE COURT REPORTING BECAUSE...

LESSON

1

HAVE A MENTOR

My friend Bobby Nabeyama, who encouraged me to “get my bolts,” is the consummate endurance athlete and a practicing physical therapist. He helped me greatly during the day of the Ranger Double Tough, and he was always a source of knowledge on training, how to stay healthy, and how to remain injury-free. If you are new to reporting or if you are venturing into a new area of reporting, whether it's cross-training into captioning from judicial reporting or vice versa, a sure way to know what to do is find a mentor who will guide you through this and who will help you over the rough spots.

LESSON

2

SPEND YOUR TIME TRAINING

There's lots of online programs for speedbuilding as well as improving your knowledge of various subjects. I delved into aspects of physical training and nutrition and adapted it to my life and to my needs while I was training for these events. I also joined two online training programs, one for strength training and one for purely rucking-based training. When I was trying my hand at CART captioning, I invested in an online program to help me learn more about that aspect of reporting. When the pandemic forced us to work from home, I invested again by attending NCRA's Remote Judicial Reporting webinar, so I could get up to speed and learn more about the technology I needed to perform my job.

LESSON

3

PREPARE

Preparation takes many forms. For GORUCK, the first is the physical training involved and then fine-tuning to see what works and doesn't work for you, as well as identifying your strengths and weaknesses. Preparation also means signing up for the events; making travel plans; checking the weather so you're dressed properly because weather is a big factor. And preparation is also having the right gear and supplies to get you through something like a 48-hour endurance race.

LESSON 4 KNOW THE STANDARDS FOR COMPLETION

For my events, 24 hours is 24 hours, and 12 miles in 3:30 is exactly that. When you're told to execute 100 reps of an exercise, it's not 99. The same is true in reporting: We know the standards. Writing at 225 wpm is exactly that, and 95 percent is passing.

When you are out in the field, you look to your state, local, or federal rules for reporters. Those are the standards we must abide by. When we all meet those standards, we all uphold the values this profession represents. By upholding the standards we're held to as members of NCRA, we will then ensure we are the go-to method of capturing the spoken word. It's just like when we're doing physical training at 2 in the morning, 10 repetitions of an exercise is 10 repetitions — no more, no less.

LESSON 5 HAVE THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT

Not only is it important to have the right equipment, but you should have backups and backups for backups. Two is one, and one is none. Have at least two of the same items for your job, and make sure they are in working condition.

For the 48-hour event, I made sure I had three identical sets of clothing such as pants, socks, shirts, etc., from a company I'm familiar with, and I know exactly how those items will perform. In that way, there's no guessing about what to wear when I'm half asleep and have limited time to get to the start point of the next leg of the event. In addition, I had two backpacks that were packed the same way with the same items and all I had to do back at the hotel was switch them out after I got myself ready for the next leg of the event.

On the job, make sure you have two of every type of cable, router, computer (if possible), and maybe even a spare steno machine. Yes, it can be expensive but why lose out on income if something breaks and you need to wait to replace it? The shortage of various items we are experiencing in the U.S. is real. Why take a chance with having only one piece of equipment on hand and risk having to wait months to get replacements?

LESSON 6 BUILD A SUPPORT NETWORK

When the big weekend arrived, I drove down with my friend Bobby, the physical therapist. It's always good to have a trustworthy friend when you're participating in these events, someone who will have your back and make sure you don't oversleep (we almost did) or not eat or drink on breaks or to just get out of your head when it's 3 a.m. and you're at a low point. Believe me, you'll also have the opportunity to return the favor. That's what friends are for.

On the job, it's like having the right scopist and/or proofreader, or a fellow court reporter who can help you and one you know won't walk away if things get tough.

Next month, I'll share my experience with the D-Day event. It was an amazing experience, and I'm looking forward to telling you more about it.

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