

DCMA Engineer Runs First Boston Marathon



Ten thousand people lined up in the second wave of starters, crammed together on the narrow main street, eagerly awaiting the signal to go forward with all the pent-up energy and anxiety from months of arduous preparation and anticipation. The weather was perfect, a clear day in the low 50s with nary a breeze.

This was the 110th running of the Boston Marathon, on Patriot's Day, April 17, 2006. The elite runners and the first wave started at noon, the current star athletes being fast distance runners from around the world. They were all legs and lungs, with indomitable wills and pain thresholds that were off the charts. Starting deep within the second wave of runners was a Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) employee who trained for months

and tried for years to qualify for this most historic and prestigious road race.

Mr. Steve Sweeney, a senior engineer from DCMA Pittsfield, was running in his fifth marathon in almost four years. Mr. Sweeney qualified in October 2005 and, like many other qualifiers from the northern climes, spent the winter months training outside with tempo runs, speed intervals and the crucial 20-mile long runs. Mr. Sweeney finished the race in 4:07:23 and was greeted by members of his supportive family. He met many interesting

athletes at the celebrity-packed Expo before the race and along the way, including a visually impaired runner and Vietnam veteran, an ultramarathoner and a woman from Germany who was also running in her first "Boston." They all had their own stories of trials and triumphs that led to the well-earned start in Hopkinton.

Set in the pavement at Copley Square near the finish line, the Boston Marathon Centennial Monument is inscribed with a line from Tennyson: "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." Runners of all ages, nationalities and physical limitations pushed their hearts, minds and bodies to undiscovered limits to reach for and run in this thrilling celebration of life. One DCMA engineer accepted the challenge, endured the event and strove to the finish in what is considered the grandest marathon of all.

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(Above) Mr. Steve Sweeney, DCMA Pittsfield senior engineer, en route to the finish line of the Boston Marathon. (Photo courtesy of Marathonfoto.com)