

Brian McConnell: 2X 2nd place K50 (2015 & 2016)

I've had a couple of interesting and great experiences in my two runnings of this race. The course is beautiful. But at the same time it has been a mental grind I did not necessarily expect. Let me explain...The location is very remote. I like that. It's not back in the wilderness area remote but this part of the state is out there with some lonely stretches of woods and trails. The first loop takes you on a sweet rolling single track that is really suited to running. I remember my first time on the course being at the front of the pack and seeing miles of moose and deer and bear and wolf and lion tracks all along the way in the dust of the trail. This brought a smile to my face. Especially when I repeated the loop later in the afternoon after all the runners and ruck racers had been through and saw more bear and moose tracks on top of all the shoe tracks! The course then takes you back through the start area twice on the way out and back from the 18 or so mile out/back climb to Granite. This is a relentless climb to the peak and halfway point of the race and a worth every step. The cruise down is a lifesaver! What made the first year I ran this so challenging was the fact that you do come right back through the start area to the aid station. It was 104 degrees when I stopped for water and made the mistake of sitting down (like I had a choice!). I could see my truck in the parking lot and had to push back the thought of how easy it would be to just sit there for a while. One of the hardest things I've ever done was get up out of that chair to run the last 16 miles. In a way I was kind of glad for the heat. The week before the race I had come very close severing my little toe. I had doubts that I would even start the race. But focusing on the heat and making it through the withering temps took my mind off my toe! But that mental aspect of the course layout is great for crews and family to cheer and spectate.

That brings me to what I've really appreciated about this event and that is the people there. It's great watching the ruckers on the trail suffer and smile at the same time. The volunteers are awesome. Some of the hikes they do to get support in is an event in itself! The race staff are professional in every way. This is a memorial event and you can feel that there is a bit more in the air than just the general electricity feel of starting to run 50 miles. It is a whole bodies worth of emotion being shared with families, friends, runners, ruck racers. Makes me smile. I have definitely suffered both times I ran this race. But I want to do it again.

Erika Prins Simonds: Ruck Race Participant / Team Co-Ed Overall Champion (2015 & 2016)

The ruck race is my favorite event all year! There's nothing else like it around — the extra challenge of the ruck, the diversity of routes and wild card of the weather makes each year a new challenge, and there's a strong focus on the fun and camaraderie of the experience. I like to take my leg at a comfortable but challenging pace and enjoy the breathtaking surroundings. I also spend a considerable amount of time on the course thinking about how badass I am. The down time while other team members are racing offers opportunities to meet new people, play games or explore the area. The organizers do a great job making sure everyone is well-fed, warm and comfortable. Last year was rainy, so our team brought tents and busted out the blankets and card games. For this coming year, I am hoping there are more female participants and ideally, a few lady-only teams.

Troy Koontz: 3 X 1st Place Overall Ruck Race (2014, 2015, 2016)

The Emory Corwine Ruck Race and 50 miler is a race I will do every year... until my body no longer works. It's my favorite event of the summer. I had the privilege to be friends and work with Emory. This memorial race gives us a chance to celebrate his life. Austin Reed does an amazing job coordinating all aspects of the race. The race itself is one of the hardest physical challenges you will ever experience. I take the Granite leg every year, and every year it takes a small piece of my life. The people at the race are like family, the competition is fierce but friendly. The race grows and changes every year. I highly encourage anyone who's a glutton for punishment come try this race out. It won't disappoint.

-Keith Homfeldt: Ruck Race Finisher & K50 Finisher (2015 & 2016)

The Emory Corwine Ruck Relay and Kaniksu 50 ultra-marathon are two of the most impressive events that I have had the privilege of competing in. That being said, the Granite leg of 2015's relay ranks as the most painful experience of my life, with 2016's ultra-coming in a close second. The course is an unbelievable experience that will take you places that you didn't know you had in you. All of the race volunteers are spectacular and provide an unparalleled level of support. I have yet to run another race that approaches the quality of aids stations, course marking, and general care that you will get during the Kaniksu 50 and Corwine Ruck Relay. Race swag is top-notch and the post-event dinner always hits the spot. There is a great sense of community amongst all of the volunteers and competitors knowing that everyone is there for great reason and are about to accomplish something amazing. For the past 3 years, this has been the first thing I check when figuring out my summer running schedule. It truly is an awe-inspiring and life-changing event.

Patti Jennings: 2016 K50 Winner

The Kaniksu 50 mile ultra/ ruck race is a must do! amazing single-track trails, with stunning mountain views! Race director Austin Reed provided great care and assurance through the race, along with all the wonderful volunteers in the aid stations, they were all top notch, when I was suffering I would think to myself; some of these men and woman had to hike in supplies for miles, and spend the night for all of the participants ", then I had it easy. The whole dynamics of this event is amazing, a day I will never forget, being my first ultra-experience. Aloha!

Susie Van Den Ameele: 2016 50M DNF'er

My first 50M attempt and only my second DNF since starting trail running in 2007, and that didn't matter. Even the male winner commented afterwards that this race is deceptively 'easy' on paper. It's fantastically relentless, and the footing is tricky almost the entire way, be it rocky fire road or snapping twigs every third step. The course and surrounding area are GORGEOUS and I love that it is so far away from my daily city life (even saw a moose, and swore I heard a bear). It's been said by others, but the absolute best thing about Kaniksu 50M and Ruck Race Relay is the people – the directors, the volunteers, the medics, the camaraderie is top notch. Austin and his crew put on one of my top racing experiences and I am always torn when people ask me about it as I can't stop bragging yet still want to keep this smaller low key grass roots gem a secret. But I still brag ☺

Tiphanie Perry: 3 time Ruck race participant, 2x Toilet Seat Champ (2014, 2015, 2016)

The Kaniksu 50 Ruck Race that is by far the most unique, fun, competitive and strenuous race that I have ever been involved in. This race is very well put together. Check in is quick and easy. The course is very well marked. There is no question if you are headed in the right direction or if you have taken a wrong turn. They provide the important essential at aid stations. Furthermore; they offer you quality food, beer, swag and awards at the end of the race. And not to mention that this race is nonprofit and supports an important foundation and our local food bank. On a more personal level The Kaniksu 50 is the race that my team and I look forward to each year. The team aspect of this race is vital. There's camaraderie, bantering and inspiration that lasts through till the next year. It challenges you physically, mentally and emotionally. You push yourself to near death just so that you do not let your team down. There is personal competitiveness as well. You push yourself to be faster than your team mates and faster than years prior. Come out and support this amazing race. Challenge yourself like you never have. If anything come be a spectator and check it out. You'll get the Kaniksu 50 bug and you'll be signing up for the next year.

On behalf of The Schweddy Rucken Sacks Team.

Kory Bannon: Ruck race finisher & K50 finisher

I'm proud to be a part of this community. The people who run this event are the highest caliber people I know. The race director Austin, not be confused with a rebel Sasquatch, puts his heart and soul into the event. The race changes almost every year and it is always awesome. I've done the Ruck Race and the 50, let me tell you first hand, those mountains can be grueling. Emory wouldn't have wanted it any other way. Emory was a great man and this race it a testament to his grit and benevolence.

Brian Myers: 2nd Place K50 2014 & 2016 K50 participant

I was thrilled when I heard about the Kaniksu 50 mile run inaugural event in 2014. Austin had been talking about putting on a race in some beautiful parts of the mountains in northeast Washington, but I didn't get my hopes too high as I didn't know him all that well, and people talk about great ideas a lot. What I learned about Austin is that he is a man of action and commitment! He put his heart and soul (and blood and sweat on trail work) into making a great race. The race is a memorial for one of his good friend's that passed in an accident while working at the Air Force Base. I never knew Emory Corwine, but I know he must have been one hell of a guy with the love, support and tribute from friends, family and strangers each year in his honor. It's really an honor to be able to participate in something so moving as the tribute and celebration of the live of Emory and others at the beginning of the run.

The race itself has evolved, as any great race will. The first year was a brutal (12,000+ ft climb), and logistically difficult point to point run. For a first year race as remote as it is, it was well supported, with aid every 5 miles or so. Feedback from participants lead the race to start and finish at the same place, passing through the start/finish area 3 times (including the finish). This makes it great for family, friends, crew, and gathering folks for the finish line festivities...which are top notch. Great food, beer, swag and custom made awards are an excellent way to cap off a fun time in the forest. I'm generally not a fan of loop courses, but this one changes enough from runnable single track, dirt road, an out and back summit, and the only repeat which is a 14 mile loop, it doesn't feel repetitive.

The amazing location, great trails, camping, post-run celebration, spirit of Emory and professionalism of the RD team and volunteers make this an easy one to highly recommend. I'll run it whenever my schedule allows!

Wendy Wheeler-Jacobs: 2X K50 1st place overall female (2014 & 2015)

Kaniksu June 2015

You never know what you are going to get in the mountains in June. While the previous year delivered a muddy course from a heavy rainstorm the night before, this year was looking to be one of the hottest on record. 108 degrees to be exact. I don't know if that broke any records but it definitely was the hottest race I have ever run. Luckily, the ever-attentive aid station crews were there to take care of us and keep us going even when we just wanted to melt.

The race starts with a climb and us runners separate quickly from the ruckers as we are moving well early on. This loop concludes down a hill then on a jeep road where the aid station crew met me with super soakers to cool me down. Ice was plentiful, and filling my sports bra kept my core cool when the afternoon started to heat up. After completing the loop, the course does an out and back summit. This is a great stretch, with some awesome scenery on top and a chance to see where you stand among the competition ...and note that the ruckers are catching up quickly! I also saw what I now think was a wolverine though at the time I thought it was a funny looking bear slinking through the underbrush. As I started the last loop, I had to sit for a while because

the heat was getting the best of me. The lead runner gave in and passed by as he headed back down towards the start. For some reason, this motivated me to carry on.

The last loop in the heat of the day took me longer than I would have liked and a couple ruck teams caught and passed me. They also provided inspiration so I struggled on to the finish line. I didn't even stop there, continuing straight down into the lake where I could finally cool off. Even with the heat, this was an amazing event and I will be back. The awesome aid station crews, the beautiful course, and a race director that is in tune to everyone's needs make it top notch!

Jacob Sill (2016 50 Mile Finisher)

Austin Reed has organized and coordinated an amazing event in Northeast Washington. The Emory Corwine Memorial Ruck Relay and Kaniksu 50 are both incredible. I competed on a ruck relay team in 2015 and completed the 50M in 2016. There is significance to all aspects of this event. Each of the five relay legs honors a SERE Specialist, many volunteers are active military or family members, ruck participants are encouraged to carry food that will be donated to Second Harvest and even the start time of the race has meaning. Sign up and find out what it is. I get emotional writing this review and don't think my words can do this event justice. Competing in this event is both encouraging and humbling. The terrain is difficult (although footing is very good), weather is highly variable this time of year in NE Washington and both events take a significant amount of effort to prepare for. That being said it is the third best experience of my life. I highly encourage anyone interested in competing in either of these events, you will not be disappointed.