



Team Veterans of Valor – Primal Quest Race Recap

By Brian Chontosh

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Well, it's high time I've gotten around to follow up the great amazing race. Not sure where to begin but, having had some good time to collect my thoughts, experiences, and emotions I will still likely meander a bit.

What needs to happen first is just an enormous thank you for all the confidence and support you've all provided. Your continued generosity over the past few years has truly made this seemingly impossible opportunity a reality for dozens of individuals (more importantly a handful of shared team experiences).

The Race: well, we had an adventure for sure. Let's just get to the scoop right out the gate. We did not have the luxury of crossing the finish line, there was no medical emergency, and we are all equally disappointed. I take great stake in the burden for not having had been able to lead the team to the goal. I do also feel that responsibility falls directly upon my shoulders and for which I apologize and have great disappointment - but no regret. There were decisions made that maybe could have been altered and decisions not made that could have been made during the entire course. However, in the last 36 hours, I am at Peace and comfort with the ones made and deliberately not made. We just came up short.

I would like to elaborate on the experience a touch to share with you all as partners in spirit. We most certainly acted and represented with the highest of fashion. Together as a team we started out the gates with an attitude and personality that was contagious for everyone sharing the experience racers, staff, supporters, and community. This was proven throughout the course, after the race, and even among contacts continued over the past 2 weeks. I believe this is a significant part of success and representation.

We started out the gate with a measured excitement tempered with restraint. Moving steady and deliberately until we started to anticipate time being an opponent. We experienced some weather coming out of the mining town and some component equipment issues with one of the bikes - it was just a few unfortunate minor events, occurring over a short period of time, and coupled with the fact that it was initial break in mileage for the stallion. Events that are normal and natural during these types of races. We turned it on hard for a two day period making a mad push into 14th with the next 3 teams all within the vicinity. This certainly renewed the spirits and we were in full swing. Weather on the reservoir stymied or momentum but we made the hard choice to stick it and give the orienteering course a full attempt.

I am very proud of the fact that we did not opt to really ever just blow past an event to continue moving. We tackled the orienteering courses (trek, caving, swim, kayak) with full effort. We got denied the bike event due to cutoff time. Yes, from a racing strategy this might have been not favorable but there were other factors involved like the individual experiences, team shared accomplishment, spirit, and pride. We did have the

fortunate blessing to crush the climbing section at the last possible moment with no sleep for over 36 hours and especially after having set climbing as a goal; be it also by not bypassing a 7000ft peak (3000' gain) in a test of navigation and physical resolve. Great view by the way. Off the reservoir and into a short bike ride to the Mighty Cheyenne... low water, inflatable rafts, rocks, hole, repair, not so good repair, 6 hours into it and 18 more with a half inflated raft full of water. 'Helga Hysides' made us through with help from a camp fire, 5 min naps, hallucinations, humor, antics, and determination. Then it was off to Indian Springs. Indian Creek. Indian I have no clue what freakin canyon this is. We were afforded the great opportunity at a half dozen free gorgeous views and nice breezes.

All in all that is about 3% of the entire experience. A life event that will never go forgotten or unappreciated by all. I do feel extremely blessed to have experienced such beautiful terrain, Nature, each other, the experience... I could talk about it for days trying to give to you all what you have made possible for us. Thank you.

The great news that matters most now is the support generated for the Veterans of Valor. While we will never truly know the full impact or reach we've made I can say it was significant. Recently Klay has secured interest from a few very large investors and the program is shifting efforts into PTSD and Combat Stress related injury. I will be doing some work with the Marine Scholarship Foundation this week as well. Great opportunities are opening up over the next few months to race and continue to extend the awareness for the vets but, also represent you all. A few marathons, triathlons, and adventure races to start with and the vision of a 100miler in Hawaii come Jan. More to follow as it unfolds.

Soon we will be welcoming Kevin back from Iraq. After he has a few minutes to reconnect with wife Julie and newborn Hannah we will have him on the course. An Erie Canal Bike Ride, The Leadville 100, and a Mississippi Kayak are all upcoming. Start stretching...

I will be putting thank you packages in the mail shortly. A small token... Please confirm you were able to open some of the pictures we sent and I am in the process of collecting from others. Myles - those sunglasses rock. They are amazing, I'm throwing out my \$17 grocery store doozies. A special thank you for your support.

Prayers to 1/5 and 2/8 who are having a tough 'go at it' overseas in recent weeks.

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