

**South Dakota National Guard
Public Affairs Office
2823 West Main St.
Rapid City, S.D. 57702**

Phone 605-737-6721
E-mail PAO@sd.ngb.army.mil

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MEDIA ALERT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CROSSING THE FINISH LINE - MILE 429 of 429!

Taking cancer awareness to new level, and public celebration

RAPID CITY, S.D. – CHEMO IS HARDER. That is the motto of a South Dakota Army National Guard member and his friend who are champions in the fight against cancer.

Today at around 2 p.m., National Guard member Brendan Murphy, Rapid City, and friend Nolan Taylor, Great Falls, Mont., completed a 429 mile journey across the state of South Dakota to bring awareness and to help others who are affected by cancer.

“It was an incredible journey,” said Murphy. “We are happy to be done, but at the same time sad that it’s over. The support from our family and the communities along the route has been amazing.”

This morning, the two runners started the last leg of the journey at Milbank, S.D., finishing the remaining 11 miles of the 429 mile journey by making it to Ortonville, Minn.

Taylor and Murphy will host a celebration barbecue tonight at 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. at Lake Farley Park in Milbank, S.D. The public is encouraged to attend and enjoy the evening.

“We are all going to be there for the same reason; fun, good company, and support for cancer research,” said Taylor.

Murphy, who is a mobilization and planning specialist for the South Dakota National Guard in Rapid City, and Taylor began their 14-day journey on April 26 at Capitol, Mont.

“We have seen it all,” said Murphy. “Snow, sleet, freezing temperatures, rain, sunshine and fog so thick you couldn’t see past 100 yards.”

Both Murphy and Taylor are well aware of the sacrifices made by family and friends in the fight against cancer. Murphy recently lost his father to the disease and his mother is a cancer survivor.

Taylor's father was diagnosed with cancer last year, which led to surgery, radiation and chemotherapy.

Taylor, who works at his family's implement dealership in Great Falls, and Murphy hope to raise money and awareness in the name of cancer research by promoting a positive outlook on life through running and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

The two friends were completely self-supported during the run by pushing all their supplies and equipment in two three-wheeled strollers. The gear was between 40-60 pounds and included clothing, shelter, cooking equipment, food, water, first aid kits and communication devices.

Murphy said the most frightening experience so far was last Monday when the temperature suddenly dropped near Mobridge, S.D., and all traffic stopped on the road. He said their extremities began to freeze and they were afraid they were going to be overcome by exposure.

"But thank God, we were saved by a car load of cowboys," said Murphy, who said the Dale family from west of Mobridge pulled over and got them to safety.

"I don't think you could find a region in America that is filled with such generosity and kindness," continued Murphy. "It makes me want to keep on running past Ortonville."

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MEDIA: To get a phone interview please call Murphy directly on his cell phone at (605) 430-9625. Media are encouraged to link up with Murphy and Taylor at the barbecue tonight in Milbank, S.D.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact Maj. Orson Ward at (605) 737-6721, cell (605) 431-8753 or Capt. Brendan Murphy at (605) 430-9625, or visit the Web site at www.chemoisharder.com