

Friday

February 24, 2017



71/40

Today

Chance of storms



42/25

Saturday

Mostly cloudy



41/32

Sunday

Mostly sunny

STORMCENTER 7

Full forecast by
Eric Elwell, C6



Radio: Updates on AM
1290 and News 95.7
WHIO. Live radar at
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BUSINESS, A11

**FOR FIRST TIME, VETS CAN
SHOP AT EXCHANGES ONLINE**

LOCAL & STATE, B1

**DAYTON SPEAKER DEBATES
GOP HEALTH LAW CHANGES**



SPORTS, C1

**CAN UD CONQUER
DAVIDSON DUO?**

GO!

GET ACTIVE

Are you game for the Warrior 150 Challenge?

By **Debbie Juniewicz**
Contributing writer

True warriors and weekend warriors alike can lace up their walking shoes for the Warrior 150 Challenge.

The Warrior 150 Challenge is one of several community events slated for 2017 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Dayton VA Medical Center. The challenge was created to encourage health and wellness as well as celebrate the milestone.

“It’s a way to get veterans, active-duty military and local hikers involved in the celebration,” Andy Niekamp, of the Dayton Hikers, said. “And the hikers can hike as much or as little as they want.”

The Warrior 150 Challenge consists of individuals logging 150 kilometers over the course of five hikes held between March and October. An additional Fun Hike will wrap up the challenge on Veterans’ Day. Teams of up to 10 members are also encouraged to tally as many miles possible. Individuals and teams logging 150 or more kilometers will be in the running for prizes, with awards given to the top three individuals and teams.

The first hike gets underway on March 18 with participants venturing from downtown Troy to downtown Dayton on the Buckeye Trail/Great Miami River bike path. Local veterans’ support groups and businesses will provide drinks and snacks along the route.

But participants don’t need to complete all five hikes to get their kilometers in.

“A person who successfully completes four of the five hikes will have hiked at least 150 kilometers and will

have successfully completed the challenge,” Niekamp said.

Vietnam veteran Robert Mencia - who logged more than 600 miles on the Appalachian Trail in 2015 - was instrumental in creating the event.

“One of the main problems I had - and others experience after combat - is anxiety and it’s something that snowballs,” Mencia said. “But when I’m out hiking, I concentrate on nature and taking the next step. It helps you look at life in a different way.”

Completing the Warrior 150 Challenge is a goal for Theresa Best, a veteran and a member of the Dayton Hikers.

“Hiking can be very therapeutic,” Best said. “You can find a lot of peace, enjoy the solitude, and do some soul searching.”

An event like this provides a significant challenge.

“There will definitely be a sense of accomplishment for those who complete the challenge,” Best said.

But the event also has community-wide benefits including raising awareness about hiking and local hiking opportunities as well as the services the Dayton VA Medical Center provides.

“It’s just a great community event,” Niekamp said.

For more information on the Dayton VA Medical Center 150th Anniversary, visit <http://daytonva150.com/>. For details about the Warrior 150 Challenge hikes, visit <http://warrior150challenge.com/>.

Warrior 150 Challenge

HIKE 1 - MARCH 18-19

Route: Downtown Troy to Downtown Dayton on the



Military veterans Martin Strange (left) and Sterling Deck (right) arrive at Deeds MetroPark on the Buckeye Trail as part of the Warrior Expedition. CONTRIBUTED

Buckeye Trail.

Following the Great Miami River Bike Path
Distance: 40 kilometers (25 miles)

HIKE 2 - APRIL 22-23

Route: Spencerville to Minster on the Buckeye Trail.

Following the grassy footpath of the Miami & Erie Canal Towpath.

Distance: 40 kilometers (25 miles)

HIKE 3 - JUNE 3

Route: The TVT Challenge

For more information on this hike visit: www.tvtchallenge.com

Distance: 44 kilometers (27.5 miles)

HIKE 4 - AUG. 26-27

Route: Caesar Creek State Park end to end on the Buckeye Trail.

Through the woods, soil footpath along Caesar Creek Lake.

Distance: 35 kilometers

(22 miles)

HIKE 5 - OCT. 7-8

Route: Yellow Springs to Dayton on the Buckeye Trail.

Participants will arrive at Eastwood MetroPark for the annual OutdoorX festival.

Distance: 37 kilometers (23 miles)

FUN HIKE - NOV. 11, VETERAN'S DAY

Route: Downtown Dayton to the Dayton VA Medical Center

Participants will arrive at the Dayton VA Medical Center for Veteran’s Day festivities.

Distance: 6 miles

* Hikers can start any time between 7-8 a.m. An experienced hike leader will lead a group at 7:30 a.m. for those who wish to join in.

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