

20 miles, the marathon is exactly half over for the runner.

It's the final night before the run — time to be alone. A few runners are out on the town but most are in bed early. The city has changed. It's quiet now, almost serious, nothing more can be done. Throughout the night, maintenance vehicles and crews are heard hauling and assembling the reviewing stands near the finish lines. Television and radio vans start to lay cable at 4:00 a.m. A street cleaning machine goes down Commonwealth Ave. — every runner hears it through open hotel windows.

April 17, Monday morning: it is very warm for that early hour. Boston comes alive. It is Patriots Day and already bus after bus arrives at the Pru to transport the runners to the starting point. Spirits are high, everyone seems to be laughing and wishing others well. But what has happened to the quiet enclave of Hopkinton? The picturesque village is besieged. There is an air-filled balloon in the town commons, and at least 500 newsmen wander around with cameras, telescopic lenses, and T.V. cameras. Overhead it's like Vietnam — fifteen planes including 6 helicopters circle a few hundred feet overhead with daring T.V. crews standing on struts waiting for the start. Gerome Drayton, Frank Shorter and Will Rogers arrive. Three thousand runners pour out of a high school gym. Vaseline bottles are strewn about, along with tape and bandages. Next in order is the annual watering of the town's cedar hedges which must be the most remarkable anywhere. Nevertheless, the plants seem healthy. They have probably become acclimatised after enduring their annual soaking every spring for 81 years.

11:55 a.m. — five minutes to go. In rush 2,000 unregistered runners. At the back of the pack of the now 7,000 runners is a jogger wearing a buffalo head, another wears a pair of Kodiak leather boots, and still another wears a bright yellow T-shirt reading "COME ON DAD YOU CAN

DO IT." One minute to go. The scene resembles a giant grab sale at a New York department store. Gloves appear, sweaters and shirts are put on or discarded, the very last minute preparation, the street is absolutely littered with discarded apparel; for who cares about an \$18.00 jersey when a couple of hundred or even a thousand dollars were spent just to get to Hopkinton.³

"BANG" — the starter's gun signals twelve o'clock noon and the beginning of the marathon. Six and a half minutes later the rear runners are just crossing the starting line. Mile 2, already 21 minutes have gone by and the accordion effect still starts and stops the flow of runners. Like ice floes, spaces finally develop — an opening here, a channel there and everyone is off. For the next two hours, hundreds of thousands of men, women and children, yell, scream, cheer, encourage — urging each runner along. Mile 13.2 the Wellesly School for girls. Hundreds of students. For the past 82 years now, these wonderful girls have enthusiastically cheered marathoners across the half way point.

Conversation between the runners now stops. Many begin to develop cramps and they fall out. Dehydration begins to appear and the agony of the track ahead starts for hundreds. Newcomers not used to ERG or Body Punch⁴ are stomach sick. In the distance, the first ambulance is heard. Mile 15: the road narrows as spectators crowd in — everywhere paper cups litter the road — more gloves, jerseys and

The three members who participated in the marathon. L-R S/Sgt. Bob Jadis, Sgt. Ken Murray, Cpl. Terry Brennan.

