

C 1169 Rob Robertson

Unattached

Redcar 2016 22.19.37



105th British Centurion Qualifier

The Redcar Blast in Redcar, England. August 6 – 7th. The One hundred fifth year of British Centurion Qualifiers. That is Centurion Qualifiers at this club since 1911. I have never seen anything like it. A 24 hour walking race with the atmosphere of a carnival. It looked like all of Northeast England came out to support the racers. Thanks to a Brilliant team of organizers and officials. An absolute joy to be a part of such an event. A lot of pressure on me. No one has seen an American walk 100 miles in 24 hours in Great Britain since 1965. U.S. Centurion John Kelly is the only American member of the British Centurion Club.

One thing that made this race extra special for me was it was walkers only. Oh what a field of walkers it was. Six badge Centurion Sandra Brown. Four Badge Centurion Richard Brown. Three badge Centurions Frans Leijtens, Frank van der Gulik and Richard McChesney. Double badge Centurions John Bellwood, Jack Bertrums, Kevin Marshall, Alf Short, Martin Fisher. Centurions Sarah Lightman, Suzanne Beardsmore, Albert Bos, Jannie Bos, Richard Kok, Jimmy Millard, Ap van Gelderen, Gino Masto, Edmund Schillabeer. 20 Centurions in the 24 hour race. Plus 11 racers with the aspirations to become Centurions. I have been in their shoes. Never underestimate the ability of someone with a goal set that high.

In the shorter races there were 10 Centurions. Four Badge Centurion Susan Clements. Double Badge Centurions Karen Lawrie, Tony Mackintosh, Richard Cole, Christopher Flint. Centurions Mark Stephen Byrne, Daniel King, David Jones, Luc Van de Velde, Herwin Weststrate.

The Race Officials included 9 Centurions. Eric Horwill, Kathy Crilley, Pam Ficken, Colin Bradley, John Payn, John Eddershaw, Sean Pender, Michael Hague and Pauline Wilson. I also met triple Centurion Gerrit de Jong and Double badge Centurion Bob Watt. After the race started I saw Centurion Tony Hill and Double badge Centurion Jayne Farquhar in support of her husband. 43 of the biggest names in World Centurion races. That many elite walkers at one race will either fire you up or paralyze you with fear. It fired me up!

The setting was the Redcar Esplanade. 2 miles back and forth along the seaside Promenade. An almost pancake flat concrete sidewalk course. The weather was very pleasantly cool. For an Okie to spend the first week of August with temperatures between 62 and 72 is like going straight to heaven without the judgement. Overnight and Sunday morning I thought I was back in Oklahoma. The wind gusted over 30 mph. There were times the wind stopped me dead in my tracks. Twice my hat blew off and I could not run it down because I would get disqualified for running. Both times supporters chased it down for me. A large food table. Separate Drink tables I like that set up. Grab a drink and finish it. Then grab a bite later. You don't have to try and eat and drink at the same time. Lots of great supporters handing you cups, sponges. The food table always ready and loaded. This kind of support saves the racers time.

I trained hard all summer for this race. My goal, A British Centurion Badge. I also wanted to have an easier 100 mile race than my last three. Improve my finish time. Despite the Carnival Atmosphere and the cool weather I changed my race strategy for this race. I set a 13:30 minute per mile pace. That is a pace slower than I train. A pace slower than I started my last three one hundred mile races. A pace I felt like I

could hold for 100 miles. In all of my other Centurion qualifiers I started faster and later slowed. This race I started slower and tried to hold the pace to the finish. Make the race feel easier. And I would have a PR finish for me. This pace made figuring the splits in my head easy. 27 minutes per lap. 54 minutes every 4 miles. 2 hours and 15 minutes every 10 miles. Figuring time splits gives your head something to do during the race. Later in the race figuring splits is hard to do. You have to really concentrate. It takes your mind off what is hurting. I like to keep my mind busy. What am I going to eat next round consumes a lot of my thoughts also. The best thing about an out and back race is You see everyone every lap. It is amazing what you can learn about someone just by Racing with them. I think this is what bonds the Centurion Brotherhood together so tightly. We race together. We suffer together. We fight the wind together. We Celebrate together. We all stepped on the same cracks in the sidewalk. We all felt the sun. We breathed the same air. We Shared the same food and drinks. We are One. We are Centurions! I felt so good in this race for a long time. I loved the set up and the elite company I was in. Just a comfortable race for Me. Very early Sunday morning the wind changed the race. A mile with the wind. A mile against. That mile against was a bear. At that point I started to feel the race. Once again the Centurion's, racers, supporters and fans pulled all of us along. A BIG shout out to my sweet wife Brenda. Brenda stayed from Saturday afternoon, all night and then to the end of the race. She stood on the hard concrete. Was pounded by the wind and sand. Cold. Waited on my every need and want. A tired racer during a tough endurance event is not always a joy to be around. Thank You Bren. Love You Bunches. After the New Zealand Centurion Qualifier in October 2017 You can pick the vacation spots. I got my PR. Finished sixth overall. 100 miles in 22:19:37.

My third Centurion badge. Half way to my ultimate goal of all six World Centurion Badges.

What a Great event. Thanks again to Redcar and the brilliant team of organizers and officials that made this race possible. 10 Racers crossed the One Hundred Mile line. Congratulations to Centurion's Frank van der Gulik, Sandra Brown, Kevin Marshall and Martin Fisher who Added another 100 miler to their British Centurion totals. Congratulations to Jimmy Millard and Gino Masto who added The British Centurion badge to their Collections.

Welcome New members to the Centurion Brotherhood. Colin Vesty, Kim Reed and John Borgars. I am so glad I got to watch you race on your big day. My new Centurion Brothers and Sister. I guess I am an old softy. Just watching you finish made me tear up. Thinking about the flood of emotions you go through in a Centurion race all coming together at the finish. That is the kind of Brotherhood a Centurion embodies. Yep. All that work for this beautiful Badge and Number. None of us knows what the future holds.

British Centurion badge number 1169 will always belong to Rob Robertson.



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