

# You want me to climb what?

by Rob Earnshaw

Go climb a mountain. That's exactly what students at Hobart High School recently had a chance to do - right on their own campus. This mobile mountain, technically known as a "Rock Wall," was set up in the school's parking lot was courtesy of the Indiana National Guard. Ropes aligned each side of the wall,

with each one holding a different degree of difficulty. Up to three students could scale the wall at the same time while wearing safety-climbing restraints over their gym clothes. Guardsman Dominic Naminski, a Hobart graduate himself, brought along some additional wardrobe accessories for the climbers.

"We decided to make it interesting by adding flak vests like the ones they wear overseas. They add another 15 pounds," Naminski said.

Making matters more difficult for climbers, if they chose to wear them, was the added weight Kevlar helmets. 1st Sgt. Leo Marshall, an instructor for the school's JROTC program, provided the helmets. Marshall was also the first staff member to tackle the wall after being "egged on" by his students. Marshall, who recently finished a tour of duty in Iraq, made it to the top. So did many of the students, which delighted Marshall.

"This is good for the kids," Marshall said. "They (the National Guard) don't bring it out here as a recruiting tool, it's just something different to do and it's good physical activity."

Junior Anthony Gilyan scaled the wall several times. He made it to the top on the two hardest sides, but couldn't come through on the third and easiest one.

"To me it was the hardest one," he said.

Sophomore Martha Montoya felt she "did badly" because she only made it to the middle. Her classmate, Rebekah Roberts, was the first female student to get to the very top. Her trip back to the ground was a slightly more difficult.

"I cried all the way down," Roberts said with a smile.

Paul Goodman, a Brickie track and cross country runner, felt he had an advantage scaling the wall sans shoes.

"Makes it easier to grip," he said.

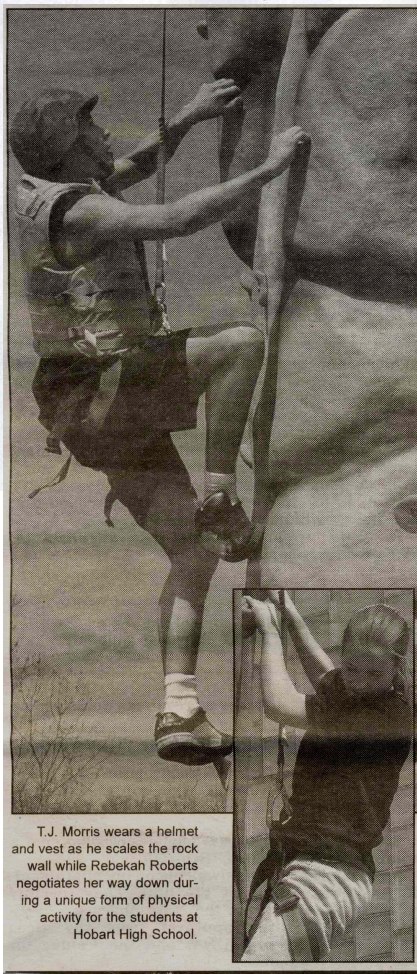
Goodman breezed through the task twice. Then he tried it with the flak vest and helmet and came up short.

The National Guard brings the rock wall to other events including both Lake and Porter county fairs and occasions at Deep River Park. Specialist Patrick Williamson said he hauls the "mountain" all over Indiana to whoever requests it.

"It's a 30 minute set-up and a 30 minute take-down," Williamson said. "Tomorrow I'm bringing it to a Ford dealership in Elkhart."

Williamson, Naminski and other National Guard members will be back on May 17 when they help coordinate and cater the inaugural Hobart High School JROTC awards banquet.

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T.J. Morris wears a helmet and vest as he scales the rock wall while Rebekah Roberts negotiates her way down during a unique form of physical activity for the students at Hobart High School.