



# 2016 TEAM

Prepared by:



**WARRIOR TRANSITION COMMAND**  
**SOLDIER SUCCESS THROUGH FOCUSED COMMITMENT**



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# LETTER FROM THE WTC COMMANDER



Dear Warrior Games Athletes, Family members, Supporters and Spectators:

Now into its seventh year, the 2016 Department of Defense Warrior Games begin Tuesday, June 14, and features wounded, ill and injured athletes from all branches of the U.S. military, as well as those of the United Kingdom Armed Forces. What we will witness throughout these Games at the U.S. Military Academy, is unrivaled excellence in adaptive sports, in addition to tremendous strength, courage and resiliency.

Team Army is fielding 45 athletes. Be they Active Component, National Guard, Veteran or Reserves, each one has a story that is unique, yet they all enjoy a number of things in common. For instance, each of these athletes possess a competitive drive that is unmistakable, whether it's made evident upon the parquet floor of the basketball court, the warm waters of the indoor swimming pool, or the green turf of the athletic field.

These Soldier athletes also epitomize the can do spirit of Army warriors and they revel in the opportunity to demonstrate to the world, not only their determination in winning medals, but their unwavering support for one another as competitors under the valorous banner of the United States Army.

This sense of camaraderie and teamwork is a continuation of the Army Spirit further strengthened by the natural outgrowth of the competition. It enables wounded, ill and injured Soldiers to further motivate one another. Through their extensive training and participation in adaptive sports these athletes continue their remarkable progress in overcoming their disabilities — by showcasing their abilities!

**“ARMY ADAPTIVE SPORT ATHLETES ARE MATCHLESS IN MAKING EVIDENT WHAT IS POSSIBLE AND WHAT IT MEANS TO NEVER QUIT OR ACCEPT DEFEAT.”**

Fundamental to adaptive sports is its principle of focusing on what an athlete can, as opposed to cannot achieve. Army adaptive sport athletes are matchless in making evident what is possible and what it means to never quit or accept defeat.

This is the first year that Army is hosting the Warrior Games. In addition to exhibiting feats of athletic prowess, Warrior Games is an opportunity for all of the military services to communicate their sacred obligation and enduring commitment to their wounded, ill and injured service members, their families and caregivers.

The 2016 Warrior Games, as in the six Games that preceded it, will leave a lasting impression upon all of us, for they are everything that sports stands for, and more.

Sincerely,

Chris Toner

COL, IN

Assistant Surgeon General for Warrior Care and Transition and Commander,

Warrior Transition Command

# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## JUNE 15 – JUNE 21, 2016

### JUNE 15 (WED)

### EVENT

8:00 AM ..... **Sitting Volleyball**  
6:00 PM ..... **Opening Ceremony**

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### JUNE 16 (THUR)

8:00 AM ..... **Track and Field**  
6:00 PM ..... **Medal Ceremony**

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### JUNE 17 (FRI)

8:00 AM ..... **Archery**  
6:00 PM ..... **Medal Ceremony**

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### JUNE 18 (SAT)

8:00 AM ..... **Cycling**  
6:00 PM ..... **Medal Ceremony**

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### JUNE 19 (SUN)

8:00 AM ..... **Shooting**  
6:00 PM ..... **Closing Ceremonies Rehearsal**

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### JUNE 20 (MON)

8:00 AM ..... **Swimming**  
6:00 PM ..... **Medal Ceremony**

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### JUNE 21 (TUE)

8:00 AM ..... **Weather Make-up**  
1:00 PM ..... **Sitting Volleyball Gold Match**  
3:00 PM ..... **Wheel Chair Basketball Gold Match**  
6:30 PM ..... **Closing Ceremony**

# WARRIOR GAMES OVERVIEW

The Warrior Games showcase the resilient spirit of today's wounded, ill and injured service members from all branches of the U.S. military and the United Kingdom Armed Forces. These athletes prove that life can continue after sustaining a wound or injury, or becoming ill.

Since 2010, hundreds of wounded, ill, and injured service members and Veterans have competed at the Warrior Games. Athletes representing the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Special Operations and the United Kingdom Armed Forces compete for gold in each of eight sports:

<b>Archery</b>	<b>Swimming</b>
<b>Cycling</b>	<b>Track</b>
<b>Shooting</b>	<b>Field</b>
<b>Sitting Volleyball</b>	<b>Wheelchair Basketball</b>

## ULTIMATE CHAMPION

The Ultimate Champion is a pentathlon style event that pits warriors from each service against each other in a variety of disciplines. Points are earned in cycling, field, shooting, swimming and track, with the athlete collecting the most points crowned Ultimate Champion of the Warrior Games.

## ADAPTIVE SPORTS AND RECONDITIONING AT ARMY WARRIOR TRANSITION UNITS

Warrior Games is the pinnacle event of the adaptive sports and reconditioning component of the Warrior Care and Transition Program (WCTP). Wounded, ill and injured Soldiers and Veterans recovering at Warrior Transition Units (WTUs) across the country incorporate adaptive reconditioning into their personalized recovery plans, connecting physical activity with each component of rehabilitation: physical, emotional, spiritual, social, Family and career. Adaptive reconditioning activities are linked to a variety of benefits for recovering service members, such as reduced stress and dependency on medication, increased mobility and higher achievement in education and employment.

### 2016 WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE VOICES

"Set a goal and go for it."

– Staff Sgt. Robert Green

"Celebrate life. Push to overcome adversity."

Cpt. Kelly Elmlinger

"Don't quit life and don't give up."

– Sgt. 1st Class Katie Kuiper

# U.S. ARMY WARRIOR CARE AND TRANSITION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The U.S. Army Warrior Transition Command (WTC) is the lead proponent for the Warrior Care and Transition Program (WCTP), which evaluates and treats wounded, ill and injured Soldiers through a comprehensive, Soldier-centric process of medical care, rehabilitation, professional development and achievement of personal goals.

## **Major elements of the WCTP include:**

Warrior Transition Units (WTUs) provide mission command, medical management assistance and transition assistance to Soldiers as they navigate the Army's medical treatment system to successfully reintegrate back into the force or transition from the Army. Fourteen WTUs are located at major military treatment facilities (MTFs) across the country. Soldiers whose medical situation allows may recover at home at one of 11 Community Care Units (CCUs). Soldiers at these CCUs will receive the benefits of a dedicated Cadre, Triad of Leadership, Military Treatment Facility (MTF) staff, WTU staff and installation resources to ensure that they have the same experience as all WTU Soldiers across the program. CCUs are located at:

<b>Fort Benning</b>	<b>Fort Knox</b>
<b>Fort Bliss</b>	<b>Joint Base Lewis-</b>
<b>Fort Bragg</b>	<b>McChord</b>
<b>Fort Belvoir</b>	<b>Fort Riley</b>
<b>Fort Carson</b>	<b>Fort Stewart</b>
<b>Fort Gordon</b>	<b>Fort Hood</b>

## **U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2) —**

Assists severely wounded, ill and injured Soldiers, Veterans and their Families throughout their recovery and transition. AW2 strives to foster the Soldier's independence, through the local support of an AW2 Advocate. Soldiers who qualify for AW2 are assigned to the program as soon as possible after arriving at the WTU.

**Comprehensive Transition Plan (CTP) —** The CTP is a six-part process that includes an individual recovery plan that the Soldier customizes and builds with the support of his/her Triad of Care and Family. The CTP is a dynamic living plan of action that focuses on the Soldier's goals.

**Triad of Care —** Each WTU Soldier benefits from a squad leader, nurse case manager, and primary care manager assigned to a WTU. The squad leader leads the Soldiers, the nurse case manager coordinates his/her care, and the primary care physician oversees the care. The Triad creates the familiar environment of a military unit and surrounds the Soldier and his/her Family with comprehensive care and support, all focused on the wounded warrior's sole mission to heal.

**Interdisciplinary Team —** The Triad of Care is augmented by an interdisciplinary team of health care and transition specialists who work together to coordinate and optimize the care and transition of each individual Soldier. This team includes social workers, physical therapists, occupational therapists, AW2 Advocates, and many other professionals.

**Career and Education —** WTUs help the Soldier establish short-term and long-term career goals and identify opportunities to enhance existing skills or develop new ones based on the Soldier's transition track, whether it is remaining in the Army or transitioning from the Army to civilian status.

**Internships —** Helps Soldiers prepare for civilian employment by helping identify opportunities to augment a Soldier's transition.

**Health and Recovery —** Provides helpful resources on access to medical care and adaptive reconditioning options to help Soldiers achieve their health, fitness, wellness, and resilience goals.

**Understanding IDES —** WTUs assist Soldiers in understanding and maneuvering the U.S. Army Physical Disability Agency's (USAPDA) Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES). IDES includes the Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) and Physical Evaluation Board (PEB), which determine whether or not wounded, ill and injured Soldiers can continue to perform their duties with their medical condition(s).

**Access to SFAC and Other Resources —** Soldier and Family Assistance Centers (SFACs) are located at installations with WTUs to serve Soldiers and their Families. The SFACs offer most of the services available throughout the installation. SFACs can coordinate other services as-needed.

# WARRIOR GAMES ARCHERY ATHLETES

**Erick Acevedo**

**Shealynn Casserly**

**Sydney Davis**

**Robert Green**

**David Iuli**

**David Jones**

**Ana Manciaz**

**Michael Matthews**

**Michael McPhall**

**Matthew Mihacsi**

**Eric Pardo**

**Gregory Quarles**

**David Snipes**

**Shawn "Bubba" Vosburg**

Archery is a combined sport with both men and women participating equally. Compound Open, Recurve Open, Team Compound and Team Recurve are the four events included in the competition. The difference lies in the bows: a recurve is made of layers, a grip and a string, while compound uses a leveraging system.

Athletes shoot their arrows as close as possible to the center of a target, formed by 10 concentric circles. The outermost circle is worth one point, and the central one is worth 10. The closer to the central circle the arrow lands, the more points scored.

The top eight athletes in each individual event will move to the elimination (medal) round. The elimination round will be single elimination. Team members may compete against each other in the elimination round.

## **HEAD COACH**

Dan Govier

## **MASTER RESILIENCE TRAINER- PERFORMANCE EXPERT**

Heather Hassinger

# ARCHERY

# WARRIOR GAMES ARCHERY COACH



## HEAD COACH

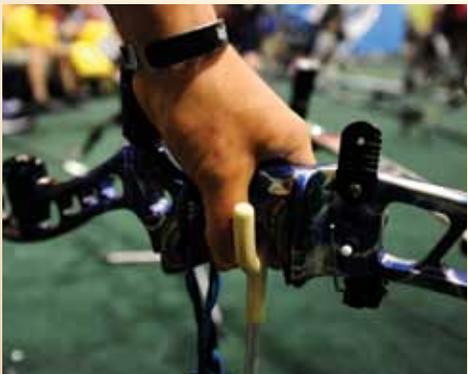
Dan Govier

Serving 10 years in the U.S. Marine Corps before medically retiring in 2007, Daniel Govier is head coach of the Team Army archery team at the 2016 Department of Defense Warrior Games. Govier assumes this role after having been an archery and shooting athlete with the Marine Corps during previous Warrior Games competition.

Upon returning stateside after having served three tours in Iraq and one in Afghanistan, Govier, a native of rural Wisconsin, wanted to once again engage in the sport of hunting but found that sitting in the woods and hearing the sound of gunfire aggravated his post-traumatic stress. In response, he took up the quietude of archery.

As a three-time Warrior Games gold medalist in archery, Govier served as a mentor to his teammates. He went on to join the 2013 U.S. Paralympic Archery Team. Upon retiring from active competition he easily gravitated towards coaching.

In addition to coaching the Warrior Games, Govier has aims of becoming an assistant coach of the U.S. Paralympic Archery Team.



# WARRIOR GAMES CYCLING ATHLETES

**Anthony Atemon**

**Dustin Barr**

**Shealynn Casserly**

**Justin Decker**

**Kelly Elmlinger**

**Brandi Evans**

**Megan Grudzinski**

**Katie Kuiper**

**Stefan Leroy**

**Ana Manciaz**

**Robert Mathews**

**Michael Matthews**

**Matthew Mihacsi**

**Stephanie Morris**

**Matthew Mueller**

**Kawaiola Nahale**

**Eric Pardo**

**Christopher Parks**

**Timothy Payne**

**Zedrik Pitts**

**Gregory Quarles**

**William Reynolds**

**Carmalina Rowe**

**Alexander Shaw**

**David Snipes**

**Michael Stephens**

**Ricardo Villalobos**

Cycling events include men's and women's bicycle open, handcycle, recumbent cycle, bicycle physical disability and tandem visually impaired. Courses vary from 10 – 30 km based on the category. Athletes are slotted into each of these categories based on their wound, illness or injury. Handcycles and recumbent bicycles have three wheels, whereas the open cycle and tandem bicycles have two wheels. Each of the six service teams are allotted four cyclists per event.

## **HEAD COACH**

James Capra

## **MASTER RESILIENCE TRAINER- PERFORMANCE EXPERT**

Timothy Mitchell

# CYCLING

# WARRIOR GAMES CYCLING COACH

## HEAD COACH

James Capra

Head Coach Jim 'Capo' Capra brings a vast knowledge and hands-on expertise to TYLER HAMILTON TRAINING after years racing and training at all levels. Living in Longmont, Co and a CU Denver graduate, Jim enjoys the great outdoors, spending time with his beautiful wife Laura, sweetheart daughter Emma and a house full of woofers. With a combination of a love for cycling, extensive coaching experience and a passion to motivate, Jim is the driving force behind THT's personalized approach and keeping clients on track to achieve their goals.



# WARRIOR GAMES SHOOTING ATHLETES

**Erick Acevedo**

**Jhoonar Barrera**

**Shealynn Casserly**

**Justin Decker**

**Michael Matthews**

**Matthew Mihacsi**

**Stephanie Morris**

**Timothy Payne**

**Gregory Quarles**

**David Snipes**

**Shawn "Bubba" Vosburg**

Shooting, a sport that requires concentration and focus, is divided into air pistol and rifle events. Athletes competing in either type of shooting fire at a distance of 10 meters. Medals for the shooting competition are based on the first round of 40 shots, scored 0.0-10.9, and the top eight scorers will compete in the finals. The final round has added pressure, as each shooter takes one shot at a time and their score is announced each time.

The athletes are given a specific category based on their physical abilities. Soldiers can shoot standing or prone. There are many devices and modifications that allow athletes with all types of physical limitations to participate.

## **HEAD COACH**

Rober Withrow

## **MASTER RESILIENCE TRAINER- PERFORMANCE EXPERT**

Cody Sohn

# SHOOTING

# WARRIOR GAMES SHOOTING COACH



## HEAD COACH

Rober Withrow

Roger Withrow has coached America's wounded, ill and injured for over 35 years. "Warrior athletes never cease to amaze me," says Withrow. "The mountains of obstacles I have seen these athletes overcome is beyond belief and it brings me tremendous joy in seeing them achieve their goals."

As a shooting coach Withrow hopes to instill within his Army athletes a feeling of self-worth and a greater understanding that one can overcome their injuries. "It's such a wonderful feeling empowering the warrior athlete, helping them make the right choices on the range that will aid in a warrior's successful life," says Withrow.

The hard work, determination, dedication and desire that wounded, ill and injured athletes demonstrate each day, Withrow believes, is an incredible thing to behold. He also relishes seeing the camaraderie that develops through training and competing together as a team.

"Each athlete brings a different kind of attitude to the firing line," says Withrow. "As their coach it is up to me to optimize their performance and engage their creative thinking skills with the use of visual imagery. I am honored for this incredible opportunity to coach these warrior athletes."



# WARRIOR GAMES SITTING VOLLEYBALL ATHLETES

**Erick Acevedo**

**Justin Barr**

**Terry Cartwright**

**Shealynn Casserly**

**Sydney Davis**

**Justin Decker**

**Brandi Evans**

**Robbie Gaupp**

**David Iuli**

**Blake Johnson**

**Stefan Leroy**

**Stephanie Morris**

**Eric Pardo**

**Christopher Parks**

**David Snipes**

**Monica Southall**

**Shawn "Bubba"  
Vosburg**

The Warrior Games sitting volleyball tournament consists of six, 12-player teams with no substitutes. The six teams will represent the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Special Operations Command and United Kingdom Armed Forces. The playing court for the sitting volleyball tournament is a rectangle measuring 10 x 6 meters. Athletes must have one "cheek" (gluteus maximus) in contact with the floor whenever they make contact with the ball.

All volleyball matches are played as best two out of three sets. Winners must score 25 points and have a two point advantage over their opponent. Each team will play four matches in a round-robin style. The top four teams based on these games will advance to the semifinal round, with #1 vs. #4 and #2 vs. #3. The winners of the semifinals will go on to the Gold Medal Game, while the other two will play in the Bronze Medal Game.

## **HEAD COACH**

Linda Gomez

## **MASTER RESILIENCE TRAINER- PERFORMANCE EXPERT**

Abigail Bilyk

# SITTING VOLLEYBALL

# WARRIOR GAMES SITTING VOLLEYBALL COACH



## HEAD COACH

Linda Gomez

Linda Gomez has over 28 years of volleyball coaching experience and is the Army's Head Sitting Volleyball Coach for the Warrior Games.

Gomez has written numerous articles addressing youth sports and how coaches approach practices and competition. She has also developed a coaches' mentoring brochure to assist local coaches in utilizing verbal cues for correct skill development for the novice to the intermediate youth athlete.



She recently conducted volleyball clinics and sitting volleyball clinics in Moldova with the U.S. Department of State's Sports Envoy Program.

Gomez is currently working with The Florida Region of USA Volleyball as the Sitting Volleyball Cadre, running clinics to introduce and implement programs for the abled and disabled athletes within the Florida Region. Gomez coached the Florida All Star Sitting team to its first Gold medal at the ISAV Adults Opens tournament last March. She has assisted in the USA A2 Sitting volleyball camps and is now working on getting more USA volleyball regions to implement the sitting volleyball initiative.



Linda Gomez was born and raised in Miami, Florida. She graduated from Florida State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education and a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University. She has three children.



# WARRIOR GAMES SWIMMING ATHLETES

**Ashley Anderson**

**Anthony Atemon**

**Dustin Barr**

**Kelly Elmlinger**

**Brandi Evans**

**Randi Gavell**

**Megan Grudzinski**

**Blake Johnson**

**David Jones**

**Matthew Lammers**

**Stefan Leroy**

**Ryan Major**

**Ana Manciaz**

**Robert Mathews**

**Michael McPhall**

**Matthew Mueller**

**Kawaiola Nahale**

**Eric Pardo**

**Christopher Parks**

**Timothy Payne**

**Carmalina Rowe**

**Michael Stephens**

**Ricardo Villalobos**

Warrior Games swimming competitions occur in an Olympic size 50-meter pool. While competing, athletes are not permitted to wear prostheses or assistive devices. There are seven swimming events for men and women: 50-meter Freestyle, 50-meter Back Stroke, 50-meter Breast Stroke, 100-meter Freestyle, 100-meter Back Stroke, 100-meter Breast Stroke and Relay 4X50-meter. Swimmers are categorized into three impairment groups—physical, visual and intellectual.

## **HEAD COACH**

Bob Bugg

## **MASTER RESILIENCE TRAINER- PERFORMANCE EXPERT**

Anthony Pacheco

# SWIMMING

# WARRIOR GAMES SWIMMING COACH



## HEAD COACH

Bob Bugg

Bob Bugg attended the University of Alabama from 1975-79 where, as a collegiate swimmer, he was a SEC record holder and a five- time NCAA All American.

In 1980 Bugg was an Olympic Trials qualifier and held a world top 10 ranking in the 200-meter freestyle. Bugg served as head coach of his hometown high school swim team from 1981 until 1996, developing numerous elite-level athletes who later went on to compete at Olympic Trials.



Bugg is an accomplished Masters swimmer, breaking three world records in 2009.

The 2016 Department of Defense Warrior Games will be his fourth in the service of Team Army. "I having thoroughly enjoyed imparting my knowledge of swimming and passing it along has been a privilege for me," says Bugg. "These men and women are true competitors, and their determination in overcoming obstacles and competing each other as well as the other branches is a true inspiration to me."



As he went about preparing Team Army for going up against swimmers from the other branches of the U.S. military and United Kingdom Armed Forces Bugg said "I am honored to work with each of these warriors as their fortitude is on display each day at practice and during the competition."



# WARRIOR GAMES TRACK ATHLETES

**Anthony Ateomon**

**Dustin Barr**

**Ryan Brunett**

**Terry Cartwright**

**Shealynn Casserly**

**Justin Decker**

**Kelly Elmlinger**

**Brandi Evans**

**Robbie Gaupp**

**Randi Gavell**

**Magan Gredzinski**

**Katie Kuiper**

**Stefan Leroy**

**Ana Manciaz**

**Robert Mathews**

**Michael McPhall**

**Matthew Mihacsi**

**Stephanie Morris**

**Matthew Mueller**

**Eric Pardo**

**Christopher Parks**

**Zedrik Pitts**

**Haywood Range**

**William Reynolds**

**Carmalina Rowe**

**David Snipes**

**Michael Stephens**

Once hearing the start command, "on your mark," the athlete must hold steady and start when the gun fires. The Warrior Games track competition takes place outdoors, with indoor rules for inclement weather.

Men and women compete in separate categories in the four outdoor track events, including the 100 meter, 200 meter, 400 meter and 1500 meter. Every team is allowed to enter three competitors into each event.

The outdoor relay distance, 4 x 100 meter, is a combined event made up of four either male and/or female athletes. Each competing team is allowed to enter one team into the relay event.

## **HEAD COACH**

Rodney Carson

## **MASTER RESILIENCE TRAINER- PERFORMANCE EXPERT**

Stephany Coakley

# TRACK

# WARRIOR GAMES TRACK COACH



## HEAD COACH

Rodney Carson

Track and Field Coach Rodney D. Carson has been actively assisting Warrior Transition Command (WTC) adaptive reconditioning track athletes since 2012.

Carson comes from a military and law enforcement background. His father, a Vietnam Veteran, retired after 25 years of service in the United States Air Force and Carson served as Peace Officer with the California Department of Youth Authority.

As an athlete, Carson competed both domestically and internationally, as a sprinter and decathlete at several levels - high school, college, the Police & Fire Games. He believes that sports are among of the best ways to engage, encourage and empower wounded, ill and injured athletes.

Carson owns and operates several fitness training boot camps in Sacramento, California. Over the past 20 years he has stayed true to his health and fitness passion, training everyone from high school kids as well as their parents.

Coach Carson has two favorite quotes that are inherent in his coaching philosophy and are especially applicable to wounded, ill and injured athletes:

“Fall down seven times, stand up eight” – Japanese proverb

“Do not let what you cannot do, interfere with what you can do” – John Wooden



# WARRIOR GAMES FIELD ATHLETES

**Anthony Atemon**

**Dustin Barr**

**Ryan Brunett**

**Shealynn Casserly**

**Sydney Davis**

**Justin Decker**

**Kelly Elminger**

**Robert Green**

**David Iuli**

**Blake Johnson**

**David Jones**

**Stefan Leroy**

**Ryan Major**

**Matthew Mihacsi**

**Matthew Mueller**

**Eric Pardo**

**Christopher Parks**

**Timothy Payne**

**Gregory Quarles**

**Haywood Range**

**William Reynolds**

**Alexander Shaw**

**David Snipes**

**Monica Southall**

**Michael Stephens**

**Shawn "Bubba"  
Vosburg**

Athletes will compete in separate competitions for shot put and discus. The shot put event involves "throwing"/"putting" a heavy spherical implement in an attempt to mark a distance further than the competition. Discus is an event in which athletes throw a heavy disc, also attempting to reach as far as possible.

Depending on injury or illness, throwers may compete while sitting. Seated throwers are given one minute between each throw once the implement is handed to the competitor. Standing throwers are given one minute to begin a throw from the time the competitor's name is called.

## **HEAD COACH**

Brad Fichthorn

## **MASTER RESILIENCE TRAINER- PERFORMANCE EXPERT**

Shawn Saylor

# FIELD

# WARRIOR GAMES FIELD COACH



## HEAD COACH

Brad Fichthorn

Since becoming the school's seventh track and field coach at State University of New York (SUNY) at Cobleskill, Brad Fichthorn has established himself as one of the top coaches in program history. Fichthorn guided the program to the upper echelons in the nation as the Cobleskill women placed second at the NJCAA Division III Outdoor Track & Field Championships in 2005, 2007 and 2008 while the Fighting Tiger men placed third in 2005 and second in 2008 at the NJCAA Outdoor Championships.



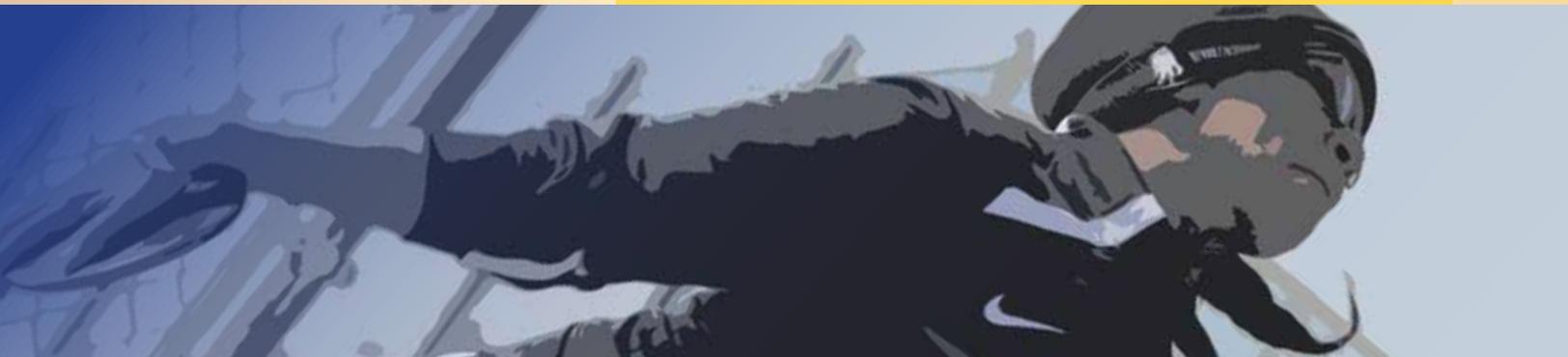
Since the program's move to the NCAA Division III level in 2008, Fichthorn's Fighting Tiger athletes have made their mark, competing in the Eastern College Athletic Conference and the New York State College Track Conference.

During his college career, the Reading, Pennsylvania native was a three-sport athlete in football, basketball and track & field. He attended and competed at NCAA Division II powerhouse Kutztown University of Pennsylvania where he earned a degree in Secondary Education/Social Studies.



In 2001 Fichthorn served as an assistant coach at NCAA Division I Georgia Southern University where he earned his Master's Degree in Sports Management and coached three throwers to All-Southern Conference honors.

In addition to his coaching duties, coach Fichthorn is also a tenured associate professor in the SUNY Cobleskill Department of Sport & Exercise.



# WARRIOR GAMES WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL ATHLETES

**Erick Acevedo**

**Dustin Barr**

**Jhoonar Barrera**

**Terry Cartwright**

**Shealynn Casserly**

**Sydney Davis**

**Brandi Evans**

**Blake Johnson**

**Stephanie Morris**

**Christopher Parks**

**Carmalina Rowe**

**Alexander Shaw**

**Michael Stephens**

**Shawn "Bubba" Vosburg**

The wheelchair basketball tournament will consist of six ten-player teams. The six teams will represent the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Special Operations Command and United Kingdom Armed Forces.

Each game has two 20-minute halves, with a 35-second shot clock. All teams must have a minimum of two players with lower limb impairments (i.e. spinal cord injuries, amputations, etc.) on the court at all times during the game.

Wheelchair basketball rules are very similar to the NCAA rules, with a few adjustments. The chair is considered to be part of the body. For example, a player is out-of-bounds when any part of his/her body or wheelchair touches the floor or any object on or outside of a boundary line. To dribble, players must allow for one bounce of the ball for every two pushes of their wheelchair. Taking more than two pushes in a row is a traveling violation, and the other team receives the ball out-of-bounds.

## **HEAD COACH**

Rodney Williams

## **MASTER RESILIENCE TRAINER- PERFORMANCE EXPERT**

Kelsey Erlenbaugh

# WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

# WARRIOR GAMES WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL COACH



## HEAD COACH Rodney Williams

Rodney Williams, was a legend in wheelchair sports decades before taking over as coach of Team Army wheelchair basketball. As far back as the early 1970s he began making modifications to wheelchairs to make them faster and more maneuverable. His first international wheelchair competition occurred in 1975 in Mexico City where he set world records in track, and took home three gold medals.



That same year he was instrumental in developing wheelchair sports in the San Francisco Bay area, participating as an athlete, event organizer and eager recruiter. "When I saw someone who looked like a potential player, I would encourage them to give it a try," said Williams.

In the 1980s he was a key player on a gold medal-winning U.S. Men's Wheelchair Team, and in 1995 assumed the mantle of coach. This marks his third year in support of Team Army.



Among his primary objectives is in driving home the point to wounded, ill and injured athletes that they have within their means the ability to control their future. "When I meet a former athlete that I have coached, it's a tremendous feeling when they express thanks and explain to me how the Warrior Games and their coaches have helped them through tough times," says Williams.

Coach Williams recently retired from the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Palo Alto, California after 40 years of service.



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## ERICK ACEVEDO

### RANK

Staff Sgt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

68W Combat Medic –  
Healthcare Specialist

### HOMETOWN

Aguadila, PR

### CURRENT LOCATION

Kempner, TX

### SCHOOL(S)

Jose D. Diego H.S.

### EVENT(S)

Archery/Shooting/Sitting  
Volleyball/Wheelchair Basketball



Like many athletes, Staff Sgt. Erick Acevedo began participating in adaptive sports after recovering from multiple injuries. He calls it an inspirational period in his life that aided tremendously in his recovery.

"Its provided me an avenue to release my stress and anger associated with my disabilities and helps me with my physical injuries by allowing me to be active in sports that I otherwise would not be able

to do" he said.

Acevedo grew up in Puerto Rico and played baseball extensively, winning the MVP for most hits and RBI's in 1982 during his time at Jose D. Aguadilla High School. He would turn to lower impact sports such as Archery and Wheelchair Basketball to help with his physical injuries, while adjusting to a life he deems as the "new normal"

"There are times where it can be very frustrating but you know that you've got to find a way to cope." He said. "The process of recovery by engaging in these sports helps me set of obtainable goals which gives me a sense of accomplishment."

The combat medic says his first goal is to medal at the 2016 Warrior Games.

"It will be a personal sense of pride and accomplishment to be able to be on Team Army." "You can't describe the feeling of comradery and the bigger feeling that comes from being part of a greater team." He explained.

Acevedo future plans include obtaining a psychology degree.

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“*NEVER GIVE UP NEVER SURRENDER.*”



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## ASHLEY ANDERSON

### RANK

Staff Sgt.

### STATUS

Active

### MOS

31E Internment Resettlement Specialist

### WTU

WTB Fort Riley, Kansas

### HOMETOWN

Winnebago, Minnesota

### CURRENT LOCATION

Fort Riley, Kansas

### SCHOOL(S)

Minnesota State University –  
Rasmussen College

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Herniated disc—  
Neurocardiogenic Syncope

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

### EVENT(S)

Swimming



Staff Sgt. Ashley Anderson has made it her mission to overcome whatever challenges life throws at her.

Her first challenge came after joining the Army Reserves in 2008 as a 31E Internment Resettlement Specialist. She deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in 2012 with the 348th Military Police Company. A second deployment to Guantanamo occurred with the 339th Military Police Company.

The Winnebago, Minnesota native suffered a herniated disc while deployed and suffers from Neurocardiogenic Syncope, defined as a temporary loss of consciousness associated with a drop in arterial blood pressure, quickly followed by a slowed heart rate.

These conditions have not stopped Anderson's love of sports. During high school she excelled in multiple sports including basketball, track and field, volleyball and softball. She taught swimming and life guard skills during the summer months. Anderson competed as member of the Army's 2015 Warrior Games team and looks forward to representing Team Army again this year.

"I love the water and its therapeutic value to me," said Anderson

But Anderson says participating in the Warrior Games is a personal challenge she yearns to achieve. "I look forward to meeting inspirational people, representing USA athletes, and challenging myself to overcoming all obstacles that help shape who I am," she said.



Anderson is currently assigned to B Company, Warrior Transition Battalion, Fort Riley, Kansas.

Her future plans include coaching and helping individuals overcome their physical challenges.

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**“PUSH YOURSELF TO BE THE VERY BEST  
YOU CAN BE.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## ANTHONY ATEMON

### RANK

Spc.

### STATUS

Active

### MOS

94A – Land Combat Electronic  
Missile System Repairer

### WTU

Fort Bragg

### HOMETOWN

Trinity, Alabama

### CURRENT LOCATION

Fort Bragg, North Carolina

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Visually impaired,  
Auto-immune disease

### EVENT(S)

Cycling/Swimming/Track/Field



Specialist Anthony Ateomon considers the Warrior Games one of his greatest achievements. The avid athlete played a variety of sports in high school. But shortly after enlisting in the army, he discovered he had been diagnosed with an autoimmune disorder which affected his vision.

As a visually impaired athlete, Ateomon found a way to participate in one of his favorite sports; running.

Paired with a guide, the Decatur, Alabama native says participating in adaptive sports helped him regain his sense of independence.

“The Warrior Transition Unit at Fort Bragg showed me I can do things I thought I would no longer be able to do,” he said. “It makes me feel normal. It allows me to feel like I am a part of something and being a part of group of other ill or injured soldiers I don’t feel like the odd man out, I’m normal like everyone else.” He added.

During the 2015 Warrior games, the combat electronic missile repairer medaled in cycling and running. In 2016, he says he hopes to bring home a few gold medals for his trophy case, with a message for his fellow athletes as his driving force.

“Do not let your disability define who you are, rather persevere through adversity to become the very best version of yourself.” He said.

Beyond sports, Ateomon’s future plans include starting a family and obtaining a degree in business.



“DON'T BELIEVE THERE ISN'T ANYTHING YOU CAN'T ACHIEVE.”



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## DUSTIN BARR

### RANK

Spc.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

15F Aircraft Electrician

### WTU

Fort Bragg

### HOMETOWN

Jamesville, North Carolina

### CURRENT LOCATION

Jamesville, North Carolina

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Bilateral tendon, ligament, and cartilage damage/instability, head trauma

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Katterburbach, Germany

### EVENT(S)

Wheelchair basketball/Sitting Volleyball/Track/Field/Cycling/Swimming



Spc. Dustin Barr has two goals for 2016. The first goal is to spend more time with his family and the second, consists of bringing home a few gold medals from the Warrior Games to line his trophy shelf. In 2015, Barr walked away with gold medals in the seated discus and shot put and was a member of the gold medal seated volleyball team.

“It’s always been my dream to compete nationally and I did it. Being on the team

last year, made me learn a lot about teamwork, discipline, and what it feels like to have a sports family,” Barr said. “We came together and fought hard daily. Competition showed me and everyone else the standards that have to be met,” he added.

The North Carolina native entered the Army directly after high school, becoming an aircraft electrician. A short time after, while he was stationed with the 412th Aviation Support Battalion in Katterburbach, Germany, Barr began experiencing many physical health issues.

He recovered at Fort Bragg’s Warrior Transition Battalion. He credits the adaptive reconditioning program for making a significant change in his life.

“The staff gives you unconditional love and support. They are my second family,” he said. “My time there made me stronger mentally and physically. I love wheelchair basketball, sitting volleyball, track and field, swimming,” he explained.

While Barr focuses his attention on bringing home the gold, he says he’s learned a few invaluable lessons he’s willing to share with his fellow Soldiers.

“I know my limitations, but don’t be scared to try new things and push yourself to new heights and watch your dreams unfold,” he exclaimed.

In addition to participating in the 2016 Warrior Games, Barr will begin college in the fall of 2016 to pursue a degree in business.

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**“KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS, BUT DON’T BE SCARED TO TRY NEW THINGS AND PUSH YOURSELF TO NEW HEIGHTS!”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## JHOONAR BARRERA

### RANK

Sgt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

11C Indirect Fire Infantryman

### WTU

Fort Riley, Kansas

### HOMETOWN

San Diego, California

### CURRENT LOCATION

Fort Riley, Kansas

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Injured Spinal Cord

### EVENT(S)

Wheelchair Basketball/Shooting



There's no denying adaptive sports has been instrumental in helping soldiers rebuild their lives physically and emotionally.

It's a sentiment Sgt. Jhonnar Barrera holds onto after incurring spinal cord injury.

For years, Barrera dreamed of participating in the wounded warrior games.

Encouraged by his recovery at rehabilitation. The Infantryman will get his chance in June of 2016.

"The Warrior Transition Unit has enhanced my recovery by keeping my competitive spirit at a high level. Adaptive reconditioning has truly made me mentally and physically stronger to tackle everyday events." He said

Barrera will participate in several events including Wheelchair Basketball, Discus, Shooting and Shotgun.

The San Diego California native says the significance of sports goes beyond competition.

"The significance of sports reminds me to continue fighting within. Also to never let any of my teammates to settle for less by example," he said

"My short and long term goals are to push myself to the limit as an athlete. It's been my intestinal fortitude to push myself and others to be their very best." He added

The IT software technician says he is proud to represent Team Army at the 2016 Warrior Games.



**“NEVER SETTLE FOR LESS AND BE THE DIFFERENCE.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## RYAN BRUNETT

### RANK

Cpt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

11A Infantry Officer

### HOMETOWN

Troy, Montana

### CURRENT LOCATION

Hudson Falls, New York

### SCHOOL(S)

Troy High School/  
University of Montana

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Left Leg Below the knee  
amputation

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Kandahar, Afghanistan, 2012

### EVENT(S)

Track/Field



Capt. Ryan Brunett has a strong commitment to the military. His ultimate goal is to honor his country by medaling at the 2016 Warrior Games. In 2012, Brunett's dream was almost derailed. He was injured due to an Improvised Explosive Device while conducting a mounted movement in Kandahar, Afghanistan. He would later sustain a below the knee amputation on his left leg.

"The staff at the WTC along with my family and faith really helped me heal. I train the same way as I always have, with intensity. Prosthetic sciences and physical therapy have come a great way. I continue to run, weight train and live an active life. Adaptive sports has really enhanced my life" He said.

Brunett says the Warrior Games is about more than a sporting event.

"It's more about desire to overcome and the will to fight and that's



what makes what makes our soldiers great," he said "I just want to be an example for my soldiers. Representing the Army in this fight would be an incredible privilege." Brunett added.

The infantryman hopes to medal in track and field. He also has a few simple words of encouragement for his fellow Soldiers dealing with adversity; "Keep

fighting. Keep your integrity. Don't give up"

The Montana native says he has many goals on the horizon including receiving a master's degree, finishing his EMT training, receiving a master's degree and pursuing a career in law enforcement.

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**“KEEP FIGHTING. KEEP YOUR INTEGRITY.  
DON'T GIVE UP.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## TERRY CARTWRIGHT

### RANK

Spc.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

11B Infantryman

### WTU

Fort Belvoir  
Warrior Transition Battalion

### HOMETOWN

Safford, Arizona

### CURRENT LOCATION

Safford Arizona

### SCHOOL(S)

Safford High School

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Anxiety Depression PTSD TBI

### EVENT(S)

Sitting Volleyball/Track/  
Wheelchair Basketball



Specialist Terry Cartwright considers himself blessed. After surviving a car accident in 2013, doctors told him he would never walk again. Determined to prove them he gave his recovery and physical therapy efforts 110 percent at Fort Belvoir's Warrior Transition Battalion. He turned his attention to adaptive sports for inspiration.

"Adaptive sports pulled me out of a dark place that I was in, and put me around amazing people, and also made me realize that there are more people around like me." He said.

Cartwright began participating in wheelchair basketball and sitting volleyball, sports he calls a team effort mission.

"Athletes have a lot of resiliency. It gives me a lot of motivation to be around them," he said. "You have a lot of people around you that will help you and all you have to do is ask for help." He added.

Cartwright is now taking that competitive spirit to the 2016 Warrior Games.

"It means a lot to me to represent the Army Team. It gives me a lot of motivation, because it's something that I love doing." He said I along with my teammates will keep pushing ourselves to be the very best and we won't quit. He concluded.

Adaptive sports has encouraged the infantryman to give back. Obtaining a degree in recreational therapy is his next goal.



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**“KEEP PUSHING YOURSELF TO YOUR KNOWN LIMITS, AND NEVER QUIT.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## SHEALYNN CASSERLY

### RANK

Spc.

### STATUS

Active

### MOS

68W Combat Medic

### WTU

WTU Walter Reed National Medical Military Center, Bethesda, Maryland

### HOMETOWN

Fisher, Minnesota

### CURRENT LOCATION

Fort Detrich, Maryland

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

IED Blast

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

2013, Afghanistan

### EVENT(S)

Shooting/Archery/Cycling/Field/Track/Sitting Volley ball/Wheelchair Basketball



Spc. Shealynn Casserly says she was born to be an athlete. In 2013, after being involved in an accident due to an Improvised Explosive Device (IED), Casserly thought her love of sports was over. Her recovery time at the Walter Reed National Medical Military Center in Bethesda, MD proved this was not the case.

“Being in the WTU enhanced my recovery by helping me to push myself as well as

enabling me to get out of my comfort zone both physically and socially,” she said

“Adaptive reconditioning has helped my transition by trying sports/activities that I never would’ve if I was not in the WTU. It has helped my recovery by giving me the confidence to put myself out there and try new things and feel like a part of a team.” She added

Several of those new sporting events include kayaking and scuba diving.

Casserly will be part of the team heading to the 2016 Warrior Games as she attempts to medal in numerous categories including sitting volleyball, wheelchair basketball and track.

“Representing Team Army means the world to me. I want to show my pride in the branch that I am so proud to be a part of and to represent those of us that aren’t able to participate.

The Combat Medic says competition is not the biggest lesson she’s learned but something more definitive.

“Push yourself. If you want something bad enough and you work hard for it, anything is possible. It won’t always be easy but if you stick with it and push, you can achieve anything.” She explained.

Casserly is currently working as an intern with the Joint Trauma and Prevention of Injury program Fort Detrich.

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“**IF YOU WANT SOMETHING BAD ENOUGH AND YOU WORK HARD FOR IT, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.**”



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## SYDNEY DAVIS

### RANK

Spc.

### STATUS

Active

### MOS

68W Combat Medic

### WTU

Warrior Transition Battalion,  
Fort Belvoir, Virginia

### HOMETOWN

Denver, Colorado

### CURRENT LOCATION

Fort Belvoir, VA

### SCHOOL(S)

Arapahoe High School

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

PTSD

### EVENT(S)

Archery/Field/Sitting Volleyball/  
Wheelchair Basketball



For many soldiers, participating in adaptive sports is a life changing gift, and Specialist Sydney Davis is no exception.

An avid athlete, the Denver, Colorado native joined the army shortly after high school. She used adaptive sports to deal with her stress disorder while recovering at the Warrior Transition Battalion, Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

“I have participated in all reconditioning activities I possibly can. It has given me an outlet both physically and emotionally, it also gives me purpose and something to look forward to” Davis said.

Competing in adaptive sports originally began as a reason to get out of her room at Ft. Belvoir. As she got better she regained her competitive spirit. Her passion for adaptive sports led to gold in recurve archery, standing discus and standing shot put during the 2015 Warrior Games. She also participated in sitting volleyball and wheelchair basketball.

These days, the medical laboratory specialist has her eyes set on the 2016 Warrior Games.

“It means the other services have something to be afraid of. I am coming back to hold my title, our title, of champions.” She said.



Davis will participate in archery, field, shooting, wheelchair basketball and sitting volleyball. She encourages others to pursue their passion.

“Find something your good at. Continue to be your very best and work hard at it.” She said.

Davis’s long term plan includes becoming a firefighter.

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“**STRIVE TO BE THE VERY BEST YOU CAN BE.  
NEVER GIVE UP!**”



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## JUSTIN DECKER

### RANK

Cpt.

### STATUS

Active

### MOS

53A Information Systems  
Management Officer

### WTU

Warrior Transition Unit,  
Fort Hood, Texas

### HOMETOWN

San Antonio, Texas

### CURRENT LOCATION

WTB, Fort Hood, Texas

### SCHOOL(S)

Judson High School/  
Texas A&M University

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Lumbar injury  
(fusion, radiculopathy),  
left shoulder injury

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Fort Benning, Georgia

### EVENT(S)

Cycling, Track, Field, Shooting,  
Sitting Volleyball



Capt. Justin Decker never considered himself an athlete, but an injury quickly shifted his thinking.

During Airborne school, Decker injured his back which resulted in three surgeries. A short time later, a shoulder injury and additional surgery would cause additional pain.

His recovery at Fort Hood's Warrior Transition Unit became a pivotal turning point in his life.

"Participating in adaptive sports made me physically and mentally stronger. I was able to concentrate on my healing. I also developed a love for cycling," Decker said.

In addition to cycling, the San Antonio, Texas native gained an



interest in several sports outlets including track and swimming. He says the physical activity forced him to think less about the pain while embracing new outlets.

"I'm getting fit again and I'm realizing that I can still excel in different areas. I like the challenges and seeing not only how I match up but just seeing what new levels I can achieve," Decker said

I'm getting into the best shape of my life, regardless of injury and it has raised my hopes for what I can do. He added.

During the 2016 Warrior Games, Decker will participate in cycling, seated shotput, discus and sitting volleyball.

"It's said a lot but it's true: it's an honor. Normally Soldiers blend in with everyone else so I'm not used to standing out, but I look forward to doing so and doing my absolute best to make the Army stand out again this year, as the best service members this country has to offer."

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**“TAKE A LEAP OF FAITH. JUST TAKE ONE STEP  
AND DO IT.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## KELLY ELMLINGER

### RANK

Cpt.

### STATUS

Active

### MOS

66H Medical-Surgical Nurse

### WTU

WTB Fort Sam Houston, Texas

### HOMETOWN

Attica, Ohio

### CURRENT LOCATION

Fort Sam Houston,  
San Antonio, Texas

### SCHOOL(S)

BSN-UNC Chapel Hill, NC; MSN  
with an Education Certificate-  
University of Texas at  
Arlington, Texas

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Synovial Sarcoma, nerve damage,  
left forearm nerve impairment

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

2013

### EVENT(S)

Track/Field/Swimming/Cycling



For Capt. Kelly Elmlinger, sports has always played a pivotal role in her life. Throughout junior high school, high school and college, Elmlinger participated in several sports including track and basketball.

Diagnosed with Synovial Sarcoma in 2013, a rare form of cancer in her left lower leg with permanent foot drop and nerve damage. She turned to adaptive reconditioning sports at the Warrior

Transition Battalion, Fort Houston to recover.

“Losing the ability to run and not being able to participate in athletics or any sort of physical activity while going through my illness and treatment process was very difficult for me,” Elmlinger said. “Adaptive sports and wheelchair racing have helped fill the void running meant to me. It’s made the greatest impact as it allows me to gain the same benefits running did for me. Without a doubt, adaptive sports has allowed me to physically and mentally overcome the hurdles associated with my illness and injury,” she added.

Elmlinger is now preparing for the 2016 Warrior Games

“It’s supplied a renewed purpose and another goal and participating in this event helps me move forward in life,” she said. “I have lost friends in deployments and lost some to cancer. I keep their memory close to my heart and want to compete and live to my potential as a remembrance of those who are not able to be with us in life. I honor them by living life to the fullest,” she added.

The Attica, Ohio achieved another goal by participating in the Boston Marathon in the wheelchair division.

“It has been a life-long dream for me to run in this prestigious race. Having qualified as wheelchair athlete while overcoming many adversities makes participating in this race even more special.”



“CELEBRATE LIFE. PUSH TO  
OVERCOME ADVERSITY.”

# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## BRANDI EVANS

### RANK

Sgt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

68W Combat Medic

### HOMETOWN

Denver, Colorado

### CURRENT LOCATION

El Paso , Texas

### SCHOOL(S)

Cotopaxi High School

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Right femoral condyle fracture with full knee replacement/  
Left hip fracture/Back injury

### EVENT(S)

Cycling/Swimming/Track/  
Sitting Volley ball/  
Wheelchair Basketball



Sgt. Brandi Evans is a long time sports enthusiast. Growing up she played volleyball, basketball and ran track. In 2003, she sustained a fracture and a shattered right knee due to a car accident. She spent three months in a wheelchair and went through 14 months of physical therapy. Six knee surgeries and a full knee replacement later, Evans says she's ready to compete again and owes her recovery

process to the Warrior Transition Command.

"The WTU has shown me the road to adaptive reconditioning. While I was in the military, there was not a program for the Soldiers at the time. Adaptive reconditioning is a way for all of us to relate, adapting to something new and reconditioning ourselves," she said

"My injuries are no longer a setback. Many Soldiers/Veterans struggle with finding a sport or activity that provides therapeutic to ones needs. It is encouraging to know that you are not alone in facing struggles." She added

Evans will join her fellow soldiers at the 2016 Warrior Games. She hopes to medal in cycling, swimming, track, sitting volleyball and wheelchair basketball.

"Representing the Army in the Warrior Games I know would make me proud. From the time of my accident I did not believe and think that I could achieve what I can today. Never to give up and to never think that you cannot accomplish your goals." Evans explained.

This is Evans' first appearance at the games.



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**“NEVER TO GIVE UP AND NEVER THINK THAT YOU CANNOT ACCOMPLISH YOUR GOALS.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## ROBBIE GAUPP

### RANK

Sgt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

92F Petroleum Supply Specialist

### HOMETOWN

Gatesville, Texas

### CURRENT LOCATION

Gatesville, Texas

### SCHOOL(S)

Gatesville High

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Shattered shoulder and arm

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Texas-Mexico border

### EVENT(S)

Track/Sitting Volleyball



Retired U.S. Army Sgt. Robbie Gaupp is a seasoned competitor. He's won several gold and silver medals in track and field during Warrior Games events, but for Gaupp, each medal was bittersweet.

While on assignment in the U.S. supporting Operation Jumpstart, Gaupp shattered his right shoulder and arm assisting border patrol units along the Texas–Mexico border. He has since had two surgeries to repair

the damage and regain some of his range of motion.

"When I was growing up, it was my dream to be in the Olympics," said Gaupp, who ran track in high school and played semi-professional football in Brownsville, Texas. "My injury took me to a dark place in life," he said. "I thought my life in sports was over and it had actually only begun."

Gaupp says his road to recovery began with adaptive sports. He immersed himself in learning new athletic outlets including archery, sitting volleyball and air rifle.

"Therapists helped encourage and push me through my recovery. Adaptive sports gave me another chance to be an athlete when I thought I couldn't play anymore," he said. "When I was active I would forget about my injury and worry more about the competition or my competitor. In that moment I would feel pain free," Gaupp added.

For now, Gaupp is focused on the 2016 Warrior Games and inspiring others to do their very best.

"You don't have to give up just because you're injured," Gaupp explained. "Everyone has a different injury, and we've learned to adapt. Just going out there and showing how much is possible can really inspire others. It's in our body's DNA to be the very best and fight for success."

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**“NEVER QUIT AND THE EVEN THOUGH ADVERSITY THREW A BLOCK IN YOUR WAY YOU CAN FIND A WAY THROUGH IT.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## RANDI GAVELL

### RANK

Staff Sgt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

31B Military Police

### HOMETOWN

Grand Junction , Colorado

### CURRENT LOCATION

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

### SCHOOL(S)

Grand Junction High School

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Nerve damage, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI)

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Iraq, 2006

### EVENT(S)

Swimming/Track



Retired Staff Sgt. Randi Gavell describes swimming as one of the most calming times in her life.

She shares and takes that passion with her as she looks forward to the 2016 Warrior Games. That passion is largely due in part for her love of adaptive sports.

“The water gives me peace and it’s a feeling I want to share with my fellow soldiers who

have been wounded. Some people get tunnel vision after they’ve been hurt,” she said. “Adaptive sports and other activities support emotional and physical health of our Soldiers and Veterans as they transition and adjust,” she added.

The Grand Junction, Colorado native is familiar with adjustment. She battles nerve damage, post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries sustained while deployed in 2006 to Ramadi, Iraq.

But the Veteran has a message for those dealing with life’s setbacks and finding the path towards success.



“Facing injuries or disabilities will make you focus on what you can’t do, not what you can do,” she stated. Participating in adaptive sports will teach you how to do things a little different. You just have to find ways to do things a little differently. Greatness is within you,” she said.

Gavell has represented Team Army many times including garnering two gold medals in swimming and a silver in sitting volleyball during the 2010 and 2015 Warrior Games competition.

She’s currently focused on participating and medaling at the Warrior Games in swimming and track.

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“**FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN DO, INSTEAD OF WHAT YOU CAN’T DO IN LIFE. GREATNESS IS WITHIN YOU.**”



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## ROBERT GREEN

### RANK

Staff Sgt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

74D; Chemical Operations Specialist

### HOMETOWN

San Antonio, Texas

### CURRENT LOCATION

San Antonio, Texas

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Spinal cord injury, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI), shoulders, hips

### EVENT(S)

Archery/Field



Staff Sgt. Robert Green is a seasoned athlete, who's been pushing himself to the limit for as long as he can remember. In high school, Green played basketball, baseball and football. His athletic prowess allowed him to play semi-pro football with several different teams including the San Antonio Thunder, Texas Mavericks and the South Texas Generals.

Green brought that same determination and commitment to adaptive sports. After suffering multiple injuries during deployment, adaptive sports became the center of his recovery.

"Adaptive sports helped me get my confidence back. It helped me get to a place of new normal, my new 100 and to push forward. I want to reach and accomplish new goals," he said.

The San Antonio native competed in the 2015 Warrior Games, winning gold medals in shot-put, discus and sitting volleyball. Green says he's looking for a repeat performance during the 2016 games

"I want to represent the USA in a way that brings great joy, honor, and respect. It's not about just me, it's about my brothers and sisters to my left and to my right; each one fighting a different battle of their own. I want my fellow athletes to get healthy and embrace the power of sport," he said.

Green says he's looking forward to being with his friends whom he considers his "second family" during the games while watching everyone accomplish goals they didn't think were possible.



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“SET A GOAL AND GO FOR IT.”



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## MEGAN GRUDZINSKI

### RANK

Staff Sgt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

74D Chemical Specialist

### HOMETOWN

Strongsville, Ohio

### CURRENT LOCATION

Strongsville, Ohio

### SCHOOL(S)

Cleveland State University

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

PTSD

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Afghanistan

### EVENT(S)

Track/Swimming/Cycling



If ever there were an aptly named place of origin for a Warrior Games athlete it's Strongsville, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland and hometown of reservist Meagan Grudzinski. Having returned to Strongsville after serving in Afghanistan, Grudzinski, now an Army Veteran, realized that she needed to confront her Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

"When I returned from Afghanistan, I felt so isolated," said Grudzinski. "None of my friends were Veterans, and my Reserve unit was in Illinois."

For Soldiers and Veterans contending with PTSD these cycles of isolation can be especially difficult, all the more so when, as with Grudzinski, there is no one with whom to share experiences.

Fortunately for Grudzinski she entered a Warrior Transition Unit in which she was matched up with a service dog named Harley, and given the attention that she needed in order to address her injuries. "It helped to know that someone was there as a support system to aid in my recovery," said Grudzinski.

At the WTU she was also introduced to adaptive sports. Competing at Warrior Games in cycling, swimming and track, Grudzinski has come to relish the camaraderie of being around her fellow athletes. She also like the fact that the competition forces her to push herself even harder.

With ambitions of pursuing a doctorate in nursing, Grudzinski is proud of her many accomplishments since returning from Afghanistan. Fittingly, the Strongsville native says her path to recovery "makes me realize how strong I truly am."

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**“NO MATTER THE CIRCUMSTANCE YOU CAN OVERCOME ANYTHING AND NEVER GIVE UP ON YOUR DREAMS.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## DAVID IULI

### RANK

Sgt. 1st Class

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

13B Cannon Crewmember

### WTU

Joint Base Lewis McChord

### HOMETOWN

Fullerton, California

### CURRENT LOCATION

Fredrickson, Washington

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

PTSD, Cardiomyopathy, Knee and Ankle Injuries

### EVENT(S)

Archery/Field/Sitting Volleyball



During his 26 year career, Sgt. 1st Class David Iuli sustained multiple injuries

Diagnosed with cardiomyopathy, Iuli says those temporary physical setbacks didn't derail his Competitive spirit. His love for adaptive sports began as he recovered at Joint Base Lewis McChord's Warrior Transition Unit.

The WTU gave me time for my body to recover and helped me rehab some injuries. My time spent there allowed me to get back into competing in sports and get the competitive juices flowing again.

Iuli says the participation in adaptive sports helped him heal emotionally and physically.

"The staff helped me to cope with the issues I was facing while as a Soldier who was transitioning into retirement." He said. "The nature of some of the activities has given me an avenue to be able to release some stress and emotions and deal with depression issues, the staff was able to pinpoint these issues and help me cope as a soldier transitioning and facing retirement." He added

Along with the WTU staff, Iuli credits his family in aiding in his recovery.

"My family is incredible and they have taught me to never give up, drive on and don't quit, no matter what's going on." Said Iuli

Iuli says he looks forward to his first appearance at the 2016 Warrior Games and earning an MBA in the future.



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**“KEEP DRIVING ON, DON'T QUIT!”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## BLAKE JOHNSON

### RANK

Sgt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

15Y Electrical Avionics  
Systems Repairman

### WTU

Walter Reed

### HOMETOWN

Honolulu, Hawaii

### CURRENT LOCATION

Bethesda, MD

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Knee Injury

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Illshem, Germany

### EVENT(S)

Field/Swimming/Sitting  
Volleyball/ Wheelchair Basketball



Army Sgt. Blake Johnson became a household name in the spring of 2015. During the wheelchair basketball finals, Johnson threw a half-court shot giving Team Army the winning point during the Army Regional Finals. The video soon went viral and thrust Johnson into the national limelight. He appeared on several talk shows and sports outlets. The Honolulu, Hawaii native considered it quite an

accomplishment since his first love is swimming.

Johnson took up wheelchair basketball in 2015 after injuring his leg during a car accident in Illshem, Germany.

He says the therapy he received at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center was instrumental in his recovery.

"I went from not being able to bend my knee to participating in the Warrior Games. The therapists there were wonderful." he said "The whole Warrior Games experience has changed my life and completely uplifted my spirit. I enjoy the art of competition and



after injury. I thought I had lost that opportunity." Johnson added.

During the 2016 Games, he will compete in Swimming, Field, Sitting Volleyball, and Wheelchair Basketball.

"I want nothing more than to compete and bring back medals for Team Army so that the Chairman's Cup will remain in our trophy case."

As Johnson prepares for the Games, he reflected on his path to the Games.

"Just because one door closed, doesn't mean another one didn't open. Stay Strong!"

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“WHEN ONE DOOR CLOSSES ANOTHER  
WILL OPEN.”



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## DAVID JONES

### RANK

Sgt.

### STATUS

Active

### MOS

29E Electronic Warfare Specialist

### WTU

Warrior Transition Battalion,  
Fort Bragg

### HOMETOWN

Middlebury, Vermont

### CURRENT LOCATION

WTB Ft Bragg, North Carolina

### SCHOOL(S)

Mt Abraham UHS, Bristol,  
Vermont

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Right Shoulder reconstruction,  
Bi-lateral and foot ,leg pain

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Iraq, 2006

### EVENT(S)

Archery/Swimming/Field



Sgt. David Jones is always looking for a challenge. He found it as he recovered from shoulder reconstruction surgery at the Fort Bragg's Warrior Transition Battalion

The WTB "forced" me to get active in sports and in doing so rejuvenated my motivation to progress. Before WTB I had all but resigned/given up on the possibility of continuing my service, but with the support and friendship that I got here. The entire

experience has rejuvenated my progress and motivation to heal.

The Electronic Warfare Specialist began a year of "firsts" by participating in several sports including archery, swimming, and throwing.

"Those opportunities help me spread the word about the WTU and Adaptive Sports Reconditioning Program as well as the amazing stories athletes were able to share as well as inspire others." He said.

The Middlebury, Vermont native says he's looking forward to what he calls a once in lifetime experience as he prepares for the 2016 Warrior Games

"Its hard to describe what it would mean to me, the honor is almost overwhelming. The people that I have met that are such an inspiration to me I don't think I could ever truly "represent" them and the hundreds of others that didn't know/couldn't make it, I will do my level best to do so."



**“KEEP PUSHING, YOU CAN DO MORE  
THAN YOU THINK.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## KATIE KUIPER

### RANK

Sgt. 1st Class

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

35F Intelligence Analyst

### WTU

WTB Fort Sam Houston, Texas

### HOMETOWN

San Antonio, Texas

### CURRENT LOCATION

Joint Base San Antonio, Texas

### SCHOOL(S)

Excelsior College, New York

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Gunshot wound to the head

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Miami, Florida, 2013

### EVENT(S)

Cycling/Track



Retired Sgt. 1st Class Katie Kuiper is a born optimist, who simply had one mission in life; to enlist in the Army. "I knew I wanted to do something for my country and something different," she said. "I really didn't know anyone that was in the army, but I knew I was going to do this without question."

Kuiper began serving her country in 2003 when she enlisted in the Army. She deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in 2004 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, serving as a Watch Analyst with Joint Task Force-South.

In 2010, Kuiper was assigned to Headquarters, Southern Command in Miami, Florida supporting operations throughout South America, the Caribbean and Central and South America. Her optimism was put to the test in 2013 after sustaining injuries from a gunshot wound to the head.

Kuiper, who competed in the 2015 Warrior Games, credits the Warrior Transition Battalion at Fort Sam Houston and adaptive sports for keeping her focused and inspired.

"In the beginning it was me and now I see other people attending all those doctor appointments. You need something in between to go to, to aspire to," she said. "It was the reason my healing went so well, it's instrumental to my well-being."

At the 2016 Warrior Games Kuiper will focus on bringing home gold in cycling and track and field.



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**“DON'T QUIT LIFE AND DON'T GIVE UP.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## MATTHEW LAMMERS

### RANK

Staff Sgt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

11B Infantryman

### WTU

Brooke Army Medical Center  
(BAMC) Fort Sam Houston

### HOMETOWN

Olathe, Kansas

### CURRENT LOCATION

Tucson, Arizona

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Trilateral Amputation

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Iraq, 2007

### EVENT(S)

Swimming



Triple amputee Staff Sgt. Matthew Lammers says he lives his life with a great deal of patience.

In 2007, during his second tour in Iraq, his convoy was ambushed by insurgents. He lost both of his legs and an arm due to an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) that hit the Humvee he was riding in. Now, after a long recovery and a lot of rehab, he is learning to adjust.

The Purple Heart recipient credits his time at Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston for helping adjust to life's challenges. Armed with prosthetics, Lammers developed a love for swimming.

"Swimming allows me to regain a sense of independence, and frees me from reliance upon a wheel chair. It's also a great stress reliever" he said. There's a sense of independence you develop. You have to face your challenges head on." He added.

Lammers has made training for the 2016 Warrior Games a full time commitment. He's receiving instruction on how to improve his stroke and in bettering his overall time. A cross-country athlete and basketball player in high school, The Olathe, Kansas native says that he enjoys the competition.

"I am proud to represent this country and to give back to the military. This is an amazing opportunity and I am eternally grateful." he said. "You have to live each day to the fullest I had these plans, now it's just plan B. I thought the military was my life and so now it's just kind of regrouping and reorganizing, and figuring out what to do." He added.

This is Lammers first appearance at the Warrior Games.

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**“LIVE EACH DAY TO THE FULLEST.  
FACE YOUR CHALLENGES HEAD ON.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## STEFAN LEROY

### RANK

Sgt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

19D Cavalry Scout

### WTU

WTB Walter Reed Military Medical Center, Maryland

### HOMETOWN

Santa Rosa, California

### CURRENT LOCATION

Jupiter, Florida

### SCHOOL(S)

Maria Carrillo High School

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Double leg amputation

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Afghanistan, 2012

### EVENT(S)

Cycling/Sitting Volleyball/  
Swimming/Track/Field



As a Boy Scout and elementary school kid growing up in the San Francisco Bay area, Stefan LeRoy watched the attacks upon the Pentagon and World Trade Center unfold on America's East Coast. He knew then that the Army would be a part of his future.

Fast forward to Kandahar, Province, Afghanistan in 2012 when on patrol with his 82nd Airborne Division, LeRoy's unit was subjected to numerous explosions. As

he rushed to help carry a wounded Soldier to a medevac helicopter LeRoy stepped on an improvised explosive device, losing both of his legs.

After being flown to Germany, LeRoy was then assigned to the Warrior Transition Unit at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, where adaptive reconditioning became what he calls his "bread and butter." Eventually, as his strength returned, he began participating in adaptive sports.



"Whenever I talk to an amputee the first thing they try to do is stand up," says LeRoy. "That's built into everyone. You get knocked down. You get back up. It's what you're supposed to do."

LeRoy praises adaptive sports in keeping him positive and in aiding his recovery. Hand cycling was a natural choice for him as his father is an avid cyclist. After his injuries, the two of them cycled together. LeRoy says, "He was able to do it with me, and that made me more dedicated than I would have been otherwise."

In addition to competing at Warrior Games, LeRoy has hand cycled through the Boston Marathon twice and has taken up competing using his running blades. He will take this competitive spirit to the 2016 Warrior Games at West Point.



“YOUR CAPABLE OF ACCOMPLISHING MORE THAN YOU THINK YOU CAN.”

# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## RYAN MAJOR

### RANK

Sgt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

11B Infantryman

### WTU

WTB Walter Reed Military Medical Center, Maryland

### HOMETOWN

New Orleans, Louisiana

### CURRENT LOCATION

Towson, Maryland

### SCHOOL(S)

Towson High School

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Bilateral Amputation

### EVENT(S)

Field/Swimming



Veteran Sgt. Ryan Major is familiar with adversity.

After stepping on an Improvised Explosive Device (IED), Major lost both of his legs, and soon after his ring and pinkie finger to a fungus. Major then found himself in a very dark place. The adaptive sports program at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center gave him a ray of light to move forward.

“By being around other Soldiers like me, it helped me understand the healing process and that I was not the only one,” said Major. “Adaptive reconditioning allowed me to build my self-esteem and confidence and helped me be more open to try other/new AR activities like cycling and swimming.”

One of those new activities was kayaking. Major spent most of 2014 practicing his love for the sport.

“Being out on the water can be the most freeing experience,” he said. It helps with your sense of balance and focus. I will make this a life time endeavor.”

Given this level of enthusiasm, sporting activities rank among Major’s greatest passions. In addition to swimming he will compete in various field events at Warrior Games.

Major says that sports have allowed him to build his self-esteem and opened him up to trying new activities.

Additionally, says the Towson, Maryland native, “Participating at the Games will allow me to show my love for the military. It is such an honor an honor to represent the Army and my country.”



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“GIVE EVERYTHING YOU DO 110%.”



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## ANA MANCIAZ

### RANK

Sgt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

98G Cryptologic Linguist

### WTU

WTB Fort Sam Houston, Texas

### HOMETOWN

Los Lunas, New Mexico

### CURRENT LOCATION

San Antonio, Texas

### SCHOOL(S)

Los Lunas High School

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Right below-knee amputation

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

New Mexico, 2014

### EVENT(S)

Archery/Cycling/Swimming/ Track



Veteran Ana Manciaz of Los Lunas, New Mexico lost her right leg during a motorcycle accident in 2014. The former sergeant and military intelligence team leader was assigned to Fort Sam Houston, Texas Warrior Transition Battalion, where she discovered adaptive sports.

“After losing my leg, I drew upon the resilience that I learned through life and in the Army,” said Manciaz. “This resilience

has become a positive force in my life. With the help of the military as well as non-profit rehabilitative sports programs, I have thrived as an amputee and have learned how to slow down, to be more patient with myself, and have become stronger both inside and out.”

Manciaz seeks to become a force of positive change. As a competitor in cycling, and swimming, in addition to track and archery, Manciaz is determined to lead by example. “Be the change you want to see,” says Manciaz.

Growing up along the banks of the Rio Grande, just south of Albuquerque, Manciaz was concerned about the many limitations that she faced.

Though joining the Army was daunting, Manciaz felt it important to move away from her hometown. “Knowing my adventurous nature, I wanted to explore the outside world,” Manciaz said. “However, I still wanted my basic needs to be met as well as have a sense of structure to my life. It was a gamble. Yes, I lost my leg, but yet I won!”

Manciaz plans to pursue a degree in recreational therapy to compliment her BA in psychology.

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**“ WITH THE HELP OF MILITARY REHABILITATION SPORT PROGRAMS AND NON-PROFITS I THRIVED AS AN AMPUTEE AND LEARNED TO SLOW DOWN, BECOME MORE PATIENT WITH MYSELF, AND HAVE BECOME STRONGER BOTH INSIDE AND OUT. ”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## ROBERT MATHEWS

### RANK

Staff Sgt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

11B Infantryman

### HOMETOWN

Vidor, Texas

### CURRENT LOCATION

Sahuarita, Arizona

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Non-functioning right arm

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Iraq, 2006

### EVENT(S)

Cycling/Swimming/Track



Army Veteran Robert Mathews calls his participation in adaptive sports “my new war.” The Vidor, Texas native and former infantryman got into adaptive sports as a result of being wounded, but contends, “After being in war, I think you’re always looking for a battle. Not only is adaptive sports my new war, but it’s helped me to become a stronger, faster and better warrior.”

Growing up in Vidor, Texas, Mathews played football. After joining the Army he took up participating in triathlons.

Now residing in Sahuarita, Arizona, Mathews considers having broken the sub-one hour barrier in sprint triathlon to be his greatest sporting achievement to date. Proud to once again be serving his country, it’s an accomplishment that will drive him heading into the Warrior Games.

“My biggest goal is to show my heart, my soul, my pride and my honor in representing Team Army,” says Mathews. “I want to win of course, however to step out and compete at this level is exciting. It’s also all about stepping off the field, knowing I left it all out there.”

Though the Warrior Games are another highlight in his athletic career, Mathews says that deep down, what’s most important is building awareness for wounded Soldiers. “It’s about showing people we’re here broken, but not beaten,” says Mathews. As a cycling and track athlete, Mathews very much enjoys competition, however, it’s the bonding with his fellow athletes that he relishes most.

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**“MAKE NO EXCUSES, NEVER GIVE IN.  
SPORTS AND ADAPTIVE RECONDITIONING  
WILL PULL YOU THROUGH ANYTHING.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## MICHAEL MATTHEWS

### RANK

1st Lt.

### STATUS

Active Duty

### MOS

91A Ordnance Officer

### WTU

Fort Stewart, Georgia Warrior Transition Battalion

### HOMETOWN

Savannah, Georgia

### CURRENT LOCATION

Fort Stewart, Georgia

### SCHOOL(S)

Norcross High School/  
United States Military Academy  
at West Point

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Testicular Cancer

### EVENT(S)

Archery/Cycling/Shooting



Aiming to win medals during his first Warrior Games is 1st Lt. Michael Matthews of Savannah, Georgia.

As an active duty ordnance officer, Matthews is responsible for ensuring that weapons systems are in perfect working order. Appropriately, among his 2016 Warrior Games events is shooting.

“Shooting is therapeutic, almost medicinal, for me,” says Matthews. “I am on my own, away from everyone else and everything that’s going on in my life. I’m able to stay inside my own head and relax.”

Mastering a set of routine processes is fundamental in shooting as well as in Matthews’ professional responsibilities—the overseeing of weapons, vehicles and equipment.

However, nowhere will Matthews’ procedural skills prove more important than at Fort Stewart, Georgia Warrior Transition Battalion, where he’s is currently undergoing treatment for cancer.

His goal is to physically recover from surgery and report back to work as soon as possible. Among the important factors in attaining this goal is competitive sports which, says Matthews, helps him in upholding high personal standards.

Though he was caught up in the competition and could hear the roar of the crowd while qualifying for Warrior Games, Matthews says that he was able to tune everything out and think of nothing but the next shot.

It’s a useful skill. Be it competitive shooting, recovering from surgery, or returning his responsibilities as an ordnance officer, Matthews can always, as he said, “breathe, relax and do what I know how to do.”

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**“FIND SOMETHING YOU LOVE TO DO, MAKE A GOAL, PLAN, AND UTILIZE EVERYDAY TO BETTER YOURSELF. COME CLOSER TO YOUR GOALS AND DON’T LISTEN TO ANYONE WHO SAYS YOU CANNOT DO SOMETHING.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## MICHAEL MCPHALL

### RANK

Sgt. 1st Class

### STATUS

Active Duty

### MOS

19K Armor Crewman

### WTU

Fort Benning, Georgia

### HOMETOWN

Dearborn, Michigan

### CURRENT LOCATION

Glennville, Georgia

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Diabetes Type 1,  
Shulman's disease

### EVENT(S)

Archery/Swimming/Track



With three tours in Iraq behind him, Sgt. First Class Michael McPhall knows something about overcoming adversity. As an armor crewman, the physical demands upon him were among the most strenuous in the military.

What is even more challenging for the Dearborn, Michigan native is contending with the Type 1 Diabetes for which he is currently undergoing treatment. Yet, the affliction has not stopped him from taking on arduous challenges. Having been introduced to adaptive sports at Fort Benning, Georgia, Warrior Transition Battalion, McPhall is representing his country once again at the Warrior Games, competing in archery, swimming and track.

According to McPhall, "Before I got sick I really enjoyed running, but I was quite athletic across all types of sports. At Army Trials in March, I broke through my barrier in racing wheelchair, improved upon my time and set a number of personal records."

"What I want to do is to give it my best and to leave it all on the track and in the swimming pool," said McPhall.

What's also important to McPhall is serving as a role model, saying "I'm excited by the fact that, by participating in adaptive sports, I might just motivate someone out there who is going through hard times and inspire them to get out there on the road to recovery."



**“SPORTS HAS KEPT ME MOVING, AND GIVEN ME GOALS FOR WHICH I CAN PUSH, AND BROUGHT COMPETITION BACK INTO MY LIFE.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## MATTHEW MIHACSI

### RANK

Staff Sgt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

13F Fire Support Specialist

### HOMETOWN

Sterling, Virginia

### CURRENT LOCATION

Fayetteville, North Carolina

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

TBI, Lower Back, Bi-lateral  
Shoulders, Sleep Apnea

### EVENT(S)

Archery/Cycling/Field/Shooting/  
Track



Whether through coincidence or by design, slender cable, string, filament and nylon cord figure prominently in the life of Veteran Matthew Mihacsi.

Having pulled a ripcord during his numerous parachute jumps at airborne school and retired from the Army as a fire support specialist, Mihacsi is competing in his first Warrior Games.

One of the ways at which the former staff sergeant and Sterling, Virginia native will strive for medals at Warrior Games is as an archer, drawing steady upon his compound bow.



Mihacsi is also an accomplished guitar player who could be seen bending the strings of a lead guitar at closing ceremonies of U.S. Army Trials last March at Fort Bliss, Texas, where he won gold in the compound bow category in addition to having advanced to Warrior Games in cycling, field, shooting and track.

In taking up adaptive sports Mihacsi says, "I am still putting it all on the line to the very best of my ability. That is all I have ever asked of myself and my paratroopers."

At Fort Bliss, Mihacsi very much enjoyed the sense of belonging that came from being around his teammates and fellow competitors. "It felt like I was back with my unit," says Mihacsi. "We are super tight."

An avid fisherman, Mihacsi volunteers at a wildlife education center, teaching Veterans and active duty service members the fundamentals of fly rod casting and the intricacies of fly tying.

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**“COMPETITION IN ITSELF BREEDS AND  
INSTILLS THE WILL TO PERSIST.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## STEPHANIE MORRIS

### RANK

Spc.

### STATUS

Active

### MOS

92F Petroleum Supply Specialist

### WTU

WTB Walter Reed Military Medical Center, Maryland

### HOMETOWN

Toledo, Ohio

### CURRENT LOCATION

WTU Walter Reed National Military Medical Center

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Left femur fracture, right foot fracture, PTSD

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, 2013

### EVENT(S)

Cycling, Shooting, Sitting Volleyball, Track, Wheelchair Basketball



Finding that “new normal” is a common challenge faced by wounded, ill and injured Soldiers. Spc. Stephanie Morris of Toledo, Ohio learned as much after surviving an indirect fire attack at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan in 2013 that left one of her roommates’ dead and several wounded, including herself.

It is said that there are only two types of spirits— either light or darkness. Since the

attack, in which she suffered a shattered left femur and fractured right foot, Morris admits to having her down days and that she’s not always prone to smiling. However, upon being assigned to Walter Reed Warrior Transition Battalion, she learned to persevere.

One of the ways in which she came to terms with her loss was through adaptive sports. “Wheelchair basketball and sitting volleyball are my new normal,” says the Purple Heart recipient.

“The recovery process was, and still is, very difficult,” says Morris. “I initially didn’t want the support. Initially I was stubborn. Here I was an athlete all my life and now I’m limited. I didn’t know what to do with those feelings.”

Morris, a petroleum supply specialist, has since expanded her list of activities and will also compete on Team Army’s behalf in cycling, shooting and track.

She remembers the attack as if it were yesterday and uses the memory of her comrades at Bagram as motivation, saying, “When I get down and feel really low, I push through for them.”

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**“ADAPTIVE RECONDITIONING KEEPS ME BUSY, SHOWS ME MY STRENGTH, AND SHOWS ME THAT ALTHOUGH I HAVE INJURIES I CAN OVERCOME AND FIND MY NEW NORMAL THROUGH THESE EVENTS.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## MATTHEW MUELLER

### RANK

Cpl.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

68W Health Care Specialist

### WTU

Fort Carson, Colorado

### HOMETOWN

Fort Morgan, Colorado

### CURRENT LOCATION

Peoria, Arizona

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Broken neck and bones on right side of face

### EVENT(S)

Cycling/Field/Swimming/Track



Throughout the history of American sports there existed a myriad of memorable athletic nicknames, from Magic Johnson, to Smokin' Joe Frazier, Big Papi Ortiz, to Megatron Calvin Johnson. Given the likes of Medal Machine (Matthew) Mueller, of Team Army, adaptive sports athletes continue the tradition.

Mueller, who hails from Fort Morgan, Colorado, broke his neck and much of the right side of his face in a rollover accident. He also lost vision in his right eye, and experiences double vision in his left.

Now a Veteran living in Peoria, Arizona, Mueller had been an avid runner for most of his life.

"It just took me a while to retrain my body," said Mueller. "Being told you're not going to be able to run and then getting to run, and run well, is a blessing I would not trade for the world."

Mueller came across adaptive sports while recovering at Fort Carson, Colorado, Warrior Transition Battalion, thus discovering a way to help him overcome his injuries. "When you get injured, sometimes you feel like that's all you're going to be," said Mueller. "Adaptive sports give you that light at the end of the tunnel."

Adaptive sports have also given him an opportunity to take his place upon the podium numerous times at the 2015 Warrior Games, thus earning him his Medal Machine moniker.

A health care specialist when he was in the Army, Mueller has returned to school in order to become a nurse practitioner.

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**“THE BIGGEST THING FOR ME IS BEING A PART OF THE TEAM. I NOW HAVE FRIENDS FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE. I GOT TO INTERACT WITH OTHER SERVICE PEOPLE SHARE THE SAME DRIVE AS I DO. IT'S LIFE CHANGING TO SEE OTHER PEOPLE AND THE DRIVE THEY HAVE.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## KAWAIOLA NAHALE

### RANK

Sgt.

### STATUS

Army Reserves

### MOS

36B Financial Management Technician

### WTU

Fort Shafter, Hawaii

### HOMETOWN

Honolulu, Hawaii

### CURRENT LOCATION

Fort Shafter, Hawaii

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Breast Cancer, 2013

### EVENT(S)

Swimming/Cycling



U.S. Army Reserve Sgt. Kawaiola Nahale is competing in swimming during Warrior Games. It should come as no surprise that the Honolulu-born Nahale learned how to swim at a very early age, nor that she began to swim competitively at age six.

In April, 2013 Nahale was diagnosed with breast cancer. She has undergone three surgeries and credits her Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) in allowing her to focus on

getting better. At the WTU she was also introduced to adaptive sports, which has furthered her healing.

To find some tranquility amid her turmoil Nahale returned to swimming, saying "The water is my healing place. After all my surgeries and restrictions, being in the water was my place of peace."

West Point will hardly be Nahale's first foray into competitive sports as she has twice before represented Team Army at Warrior Games. "I enjoy being able to represent Team Army because I am proud to serve my country," says Nahale. "I also enjoy being with the team and listening to everyone's stories and sharing training tips."

Training also figures prominently in Nahale's career goals as she has an interest in one day becoming a drill sergeant in the Army Reserve. Additionally she intends to return to college in order to pursue a degree in accounting in hopes of becoming a certified public accountant.

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**“DON'T EVER QUIT. NO MATTER HOW HARD IT GETS, HOW MUCH PAIN YOU'RE IN, OR HOW OFTEN YOU THINK THAT IT WILL NEVER GET BETTER, DON'T QUIT. ONE OF MY MENTORS SAID TO ME A LONG TIME AGO 'I WILL NEVER QUIT ON YOU, DON'T YOU EVER QUIT ON ME'. I LIVE THAT EVERY DAY.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## ERIC PARDO

### RANK

Staff Sgt.

### STATUS

Retired

### MOS

68W Combat Medic

### WTU

WTB Fort Sam Houston, Texas

### HOMETOWN

North Bergen, New Jersey

### CURRENT LOCATION

San Antonio, Texas

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Ankle, Left knee, Bulging disc, TBI, PTSD

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Afghanistan

### EVENT(S)

Archery/Cycling/Field/Sitting Volleyball/Swimming/Track



It is said that confidence comes from discipline and training. This especially rings true for America's wounded, ill and injured athletes who, like Staff Sgt. Eric Pardo of North Bergen, New Jersey, credit adaptive sports for demonstrating that their injuries will in no way prevent them from achieving their goals.

Pardo praises his exposure to adaptive sports, while assigned to Fort Sam

Houston, Texas, Warrior Transition Battalion, for giving him the self-assurance he needed to recover from wounds suffered in Afghanistan as well as during airborne operations with his unit. He also asserts that, as a Veteran reentering the civilian workforce, the athletic training he has received has helped him professionally.

As a returning Warrior Games athlete, Pardo says "Sports and athletic competition has given me a sense of purpose and has

helped me to heal mentally." He states that he is honored, once again, to be representing Team Army.



A health care specialist while he was on active duty, Pardo has plans of finishing a college degree. He advises other wounded, ill and injured, as well as aspiring athletes, to never give up. Says Pardo, "Your mind is what controls your body. Do not let your body and the

circumstance dictate your future."

Pardo has a full athletic calendar heading into Warrior Games, competing in archery, cycling, field, sitting volleyball, swimming and track. Training and competition remain ever on his mind. Among his goals, in addition to winning medals, is in obtaining his own recumbent bike.

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**“SPORTS COMPETITION HAS GIVEN ME A SENSE OF PURPOSE AND HAS HELPED ME TO HEAL MENTALLY.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## CHRISTOPHER PARKS

### RANK

1st Lt.

### STATUS

Active

### MOS

65D Physician Assistant

### WTU

WTB Fort Hood, Texas

### HOMETOWN

Lakeside, California

### CURRENT LOCATION

Fort Hood, Texas

### SCHOOL(S)

El Capitan High School

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Right above-knee amputation

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Lakeside, California

### EVENT(S)

Cycling/Field/Sitting Volleyball/  
Swimming/Track/Wheelchair  
Basketball



Adaptive sports has allowed 1st Lt. Christopher Parks to rediscover the athlete within him, as well as the sporting spirit that he briefly lost after a bacterial infection took away his right leg.

Parks, a physician assistant, was born in Bethesda, Maryland but grew up in Lakeside, California. He acquired the infection while working in the attic of his home, scraping his foot on a metal hinge.

Six weeks later he awoke from a coma in the hospital, with an amputated leg.

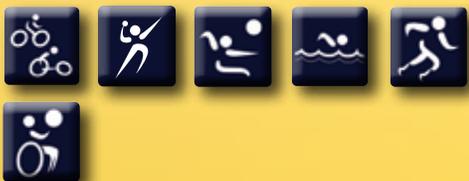
Though he confronted depression and anger issues upon waking from his coma, Parks says that his adjustment was relatively quick because there had been no buildup in losing his leg. "It was just gone," said Parks. "So hey, you have to deal with it immediately."

Assigned to the Fort Hood, Texas, Warrior Transition Brigade, Parks found that adaptive sports allowed him to get back in the game.

Competing in cycling, field, sitting volleyball, swimming, track and wheelchair basketball at the 2016 Warrior Games, Parks epitomizes the get-up-and-go spirit of an Army warrior. "Get out there and do it," says Parks to other aspiring athletes. "Don't be afraid of failure or trying something new. Just get out there and see what you can do!"



**“BEING ABLE TO COMPLETE IN SPORTING COMPETITION HAS ENABLED THE WARRIOR SIDE OF ME TO RESURFACE. THROUGH THAT I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FIND MYSELF AGAIN.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## TIMOTHY PAYNE

### RANK

Staff Sgt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

11B Infantryman

### WTU

WTB Walter Reed Military Medical Center, Maryland

### HOMETOWN

Amherst, New York

### CURRENT LOCATION

Raleigh, North Carolina

### SCHOOL(S)

Williamsville North High School

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Double above-knee amputation

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Afghanistan, 2011

### EVENT(S)

Cycling/Field/Shooting/  
Swimming



After losing his legs to an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan in July, 2011 retired Staff Sgt. Timothy Payne fell back upon his Army values in shaping his overall attitude. According to Payne, "My appreciation for Army values, the Soldier's creed, as well as the Warrior Ethos helped me to adapt and overcome adversity and to become the man that I am today."

Payne, who competed in the 2015 Warrior Games, claims that physical fitness has been central to his recovery. The Amherst, New York native credits adaptive reconditioning with helping him to maintain a healthy lifestyle and attain, what he terms, a sense of "mental clarity."

At the 2016 Warrior Games, Payne looks forward to winning medals. More than anything, however, Payne relishes being around his fellow athletes, saying "We are all part of a military family."

Payne is proud to be representing the U.S. Army and his country at the Warrior Games. Of his fellow Army athletes he says, "You get used to being with the team. They feel like family. When we are all together again you feel like you are a part of one big family."

In addition to athletic competition Payne enjoys sharing his story and telling others of the way in which he overcame his injuries. He recently published his memoirs and is looking forward to taking his story on the road.



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**“AFTER 11 YEARS IN THE MILITARY, YOU GET USED BEING A PART OF A TEAM. THEY FEEL LIKE FAMILY. PARTICIPATING IN ADAPTIVE SPORTS FEELS LIKE BEING A PART OF A FAMILY AGAIN.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## ZEDRIK PITTS

### RANK

Staff Sgt.

### STATUS

Army Reserves

### MOS

12N Horizontal Construction Engineer

### WTU

Fort Bliss, Texas

### HOMETOWN

Tuscaloosa, Alabama

### CURRENT LOCATION

Tuscaloosa, Alabama

### SCHOOL(S)

University of Alabama

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Graves' Disease, Fascia Hernia

### EVENT(S)

Cycling/Track



Stability is a central principle in maintaining athletic mobility. Likewise, participation in athletics can be an important consideration in terms of maintaining stability in life. A perfect example of this is U.S. Army Reserve Staff Sgt. Zedrik Pitts, who was diagnosed in 2013 with Graves' disease, an auto-immune disorder that leads to hyperthyroidism.

One of the keys to Pitts for preserving a measure of stability is through participation in adaptive sports, which he first encountered while assigned to Fort Bliss, Texas, Warrior Transition Battalion (WTB). "Through adaptive sports I was able to stabilize my disease a lot faster than normal, and my pain management skills have improved," said Pitts, a Tuscaloosa, Alabama native.

While recovering at the WTB he was able, through adaptive cycling, to gradually improve upon his strength and endurance.

Representing Team Army at the 2015 Warrior Games, Pitts demonstrated the extent to which his cycling and track abilities had progressed. The competition also allowed him to gauge his overall physical and mental well-being.

With expectations of graduating from the University of Alabama, Pitts has his sights set on becoming an officer in the U.S. Pacific Command.

He believes it important to pay it forward by serving as a role model for other wounded, ill and injured. According to Pitts, "When you're feeling down and out, you're not alone. There are other Soldiers that have been where you are, but they used adaptive sports to improve their overall well-being. And so can you!"

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**“WHEN YOU’RE FEELING DOWN AND OUT, YOU’RE NOT ALONE. THERE ARE OTHER SOLDIERS THAT HAVE BEEN WHERE YOU ARE, BUT THEY USED ADAPTIVE SPORTS TO IMPROVE THEIR OVERALL WELL-BEING. AND YOU CAN TOO!”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## GREGORY QUARLES

### RANK

Staff Sgt.

### STATUS

Active

### MOS

11B Infantryman

### WTU

Fort Benning, Georgia

### HOMETOWN

Ringgold, Georgia

### CURRENT LOCATION

Fort Benning, Georgia

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Fractured Neck

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Afghanistan

### EVENT(S)

Archery, Cycling, Field, Shooting



In terms of overall fabrication, the wooden podiums where Warrior Games medalists stand would never rank as the low-point of any woodworker's career. Nonetheless, for Sgt. Gregory Quarles of Ringgold, Georgia, an accomplished woodworker in addition to Warrior Games athlete, the honor of ascending these podiums would be a high point of his Army career.

Sustaining numerous injuries throughout his years as a Soldier, including a shot to the helmet, suffering a fractured neck, and surviving a vehicle born improvised explosive device in Afghanistan, Quarles views athletics as a continuation of his Army mission.

"Sports allows me to participate in events that I once did or never did before, even though injured," says Quarles. "It has helped by brining me out of a dark place, and letting me be around others with similar injuries or worse."

Quarles' short term goal is to win as many gold medals as he can for Team Army. His long term goal is to transition to civilian life and to grow his woodworking business.

He credits his wife as being his top supporter throughout his recovery, saying "Without her I would not be where I am today."

Competing in archery, cycling, field and shooting Quarles encourages aspiring athletes to get out there and give things a try. "The sky is the limit," says Quarles. "You just have to have the desire and determination to reach out and grab what you want."

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**“FOR ALL OF YOU FUTURE ATHLETES THE BIGGEST PIECE OF ADVICE I CAN GIVE IS TO GET OUT THERE AND COMPETE. IF YOU NEVER TRY IT THEN YOU WILL NEVER KNOW WHAT IT IS YOU CAN DO OR CAN'T DO.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## HAYWOOD RANGE

### RANK

Spc.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

11B Infantryman

### WTU

WTB Fort Sam Houston, Texas

### HOMETOWN

Palm Beach, Florida

### CURRENT LOCATION

San Antonio, Texas

### SCHOOL(S)

Jacksonville University

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Right arm amputation

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Fort Irwin, California, 2012

### EVENT(S)

Field/Track



Florida native Spc. Hayward Range attended Jacksonville University on a football scholarship. Athletics had always been crucial to Range as it gave him something upon which to remain focused.

After completing college, however, he found himself back in his hometown with little sense of direction in regards to his future. It was then that he stopped by an Army recruitment office seeking to enlist.

"After all," says Range, "the only thing more American than football, is serving our great nation."

With just over a year of service behind him Range became injured at Fort Irwin, California when his combat vehicle rolled down a mountainside, the violence of which forced Range to undergo the amputation of his right arm.

During his months of physical and emotional recovery Range assessed his new normal. As with his life on the gridiron he knew that he had but one choice, which was to keep moving forward.

Once assigned to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Warrior Transition Battalion, Range became acquainted with adaptive sports and rediscovered his love of athletic competition. "I was able to compete at many events, including triathlons, the Endeavor Games, and Texas Regionals," said Range, who also represented Team Army in the 2015 Warrior Games.



Now an Army Veteran, participating in his second Warrior Games, Range continues to push himself forward, with aspirations of becoming a Paralympian, and taking up, again, his academic pursuits as he looks towards a degree in exercise science.

“GET OUT WHAT YOU PUT IN.”



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## WILLIAM REYNOLDS

### RANK

Cpt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

11A Infantry Officer

### HOMETOWN

Pittsford, New York

### CURRENT LOCATION

Bethesda, Maryland

### SCHOOL(S)

United States Military Academy

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Left, above-knee amputation

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Iraq, 2004

### EVENT(S)

Cycling/Field/Track



Capt. (Ret.) William Reynolds exudes motivation and success. The Rochester, New York native also displays tremendous leadership qualities. These assets have been central to Reynolds throughout his transition to civilian life— a transition that was thrust upon him after an improvised explosive device detonated close by while on foot patrol in the southwest of Baghdad. His injuries eventually led to the loss of his

left leg.

A collegiate gymnast who took up endurance sports upon being commissioned in the Army, Reynolds has been a standout for Team Army in track and field. In addition to earning even more medals, Reynold's goal is to serve as a motivating force for all 2016 Warrior Games athletes.

Now a Veteran residing in Bethesda, Maryland the former infantry officer views sports competition as means of participating in something bigger than himself. Says Reynolds, "Through team competition, you learn lifelong skills and lessons that you can translate to any part of your life."



This is where Reynold's sense of endurance comes into play. Though no longer serving in the same capacity in which he had before sustaining the injury, he could still, said Reynolds, "motivate and inspire the Soldier's with whom I served."

In addition to athletic competition, Reynolds' goals have included the furthering of his education. In 2010 he earned a Master of Business Administration and a Master of Public Health at University of Rochester, New York.

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**“ DETERMINE WHAT YOUR GOALS ARE EARLY, AND NEVER LOSE SIGHT OF THEM, OR STOP WORKING TOWARDS THEM. ”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## CARMALINA ROWE

### RANK

Sgt.

### STATUS

National Guard

### MOS

31B Military Police

### WTU

WTB Fort Bliss, Texas

### HOMETOWN

Paxton, MA

### CURRENT LOCATION

Fort Bliss, TX

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

PTSD, degenerative disc in C-spine and L-spine, bursitis of left shoulder, plantar fasciitis.

### EVENT(S)

Cycling/Swimming/Track/  
Wheelchair Basketball



The endorphin high that she receives after her morning bike rides and the energy and vitality realized through yoga are central to Sgt. Carmalina Rowe. "They raise my spirits to tackle the rest of my day," says the military policewoman from Paxton, Massachusetts.

In May 2015 Rowe arrived at Fort Bliss, Texas, Warrior Transition Battalion with a diagnosis of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

She was immediately introduced to their cycling program, eventually working her way up to riding every day of the week. "Cycling gave me something positive to focus my energy on and in turn gave me something to live for," says Rowe.

As one of three National Guard Soldiers competing at Fort Bliss in March for a chance to compete at Warrior Games Rowe participated in swimming, wheelchair basketball and track, in addition to her cycling. "To be able to represent the Army at the Warrior Games is an incredible blessing and a prayer come true," says Rowe."

According to Rowe, as a member of Team Army she's able to push her athletic abilities to the limit. She also says sports gives her discipline, motivation and, most importantly, happiness. She exclaims that she competes on behalf of every Soldier confronting PTSD.

Rowe is interested in working towards a Doctorate in psychology, saying "I would most appreciate a career in which I could teach others how to cope with PTSD. I know I can't help anyone until I heal myself, therefore this is a long term goal."

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**“THE ADVICE I WOULD SHARE WITH FUTURE ATHLETES WOULD BE TO PRACTICE IMAGERY, BELIEVE IN YOURSELF (POSITIVE SELF-TALK), AND IMPLEMENT APPROPRIATE AMOUNT OF RECOVERY DAYS. A RECOVERY DAY SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING: ICE BATH, HOT TUB, DEEP TISSUE MASSAGE, HYDRATION, STRETCHING AND/OR YOGA.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## ALEXANDER SHAW

### RANK

Staff Sgt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

11B Infantryman

### WTU

Fort Sam Houston, Texas

### HOMETOWN

Baltimore, Maryland

### CURRENT LOCATION

Clarksville, Tennessee

### SCHOOL(S)

Southern High School

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Below knee leg amputation

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Iraq, 2006

### EVENT(S)

Wheelchair Basketball/ Sitting Volleyball/Cycling



A cornerstone of Team Army sitting volleyball and wheelchair basketball Veteran Staff Sgt. Alexander Shaw has an imposing reach that enables him to dominate at the net and to rebound beneath the basket. The Baltimore, Maryland native and past Warrior Games medalist brings his athletic prowess to West Point, where he will once again strive for gold, competing in sitting volleyball, wheelchair basketball and cycling.

Shaw enlisted in the Army in 1989 and saw numerous deployments. On one of those deployments, in 2006, the Humvee in which he had been riding was struck by an improvised explosive device. The infantryman was severely injured, undergoing a below-knee amputation of his left leg. Shaw continued his military service until retiring in 2014.

During his recovery in a Warrior Transition Unit (WTU), Shaw, a recipient of two Purple Hearts and a Silver Star, encountered adaptive sports. In addition to keeping him physically fit, Shaw credits adaptive sports for instilling him with discipline, motivation and a sense of confidence that has enabled him to succeed.

Among his many goals, Shaw wants to continue serving as role model and mentor to young people. Currently residing in Clarksville, Tennessee, Shaw also wants to do his utmost in making adaptive sports more readily available to those who would benefit from it within his community.

Last but not least, Shaw aspires to draw upon his considerable experience on the court and coach a wheelchair basketball team.



“ALWAYS STRIVE TO BE THE BEST WHATEVER YOU DO AND STAY FOCUSED ON THE TASK AT HAND.”



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## DAVID SNIPES

### RANK

Spc.

### STATUS

Active

### MOS

88M Motor Transport Operator

### HOMETOWN

Teaneck, New Jersey

### CURRENT LOCATION

WTU Walter Reed National Medical Military Center, Bethesda, MD

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Brachial Plexus Injury/  
Paralyzed left arm

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

New Jersey, 2014

### EVENT(S)

Archery/Cycling/Field/Shooting/  
Sitting Volleyball/Track



Spc. David Snipes of Teaneck, New Jersey has been giving serious consideration to pursuing a degree in criminal justice. At present the active duty motor transport operator is intent upon completing his associate degree before transitioning back to civilian life. "I am still assessing my situation and trying to determine the best career path," says Snipes.

In May of 2014, Snipes was visiting family in New Jersey during leave from his unit in Germany. While riding a motorcycle Snipes was hit by a car.

"I don't remember anything at all between getting on the motorcycle and waking up in the hospital," says Snipes. Though friends behind him at the time of the accident have given him the details of the accident, he chooses instead to focus on his recovery.

The worst of Snipes' injuries include damage to his brachial plexus, the network of nerves that send signals from the spine to the shoulder, arm and hand.

Snipes was relocated to Walter Reed Warrior Transition Unit, where he took up adaptive sports. As a person who says that he likes to try everything, Snipes is competing in archery, cycling, shooting, and sitting volleyball, as well as track and field at Warrior Games.



Though he's fairly new to most of these sports, Snipes intends to give it his best. "Serving in the Army is a great privilege," says Snipes, "and Warrior Games is avenue in which I could fulfill that commitment given my current limiting circumstances."

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**“THIS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY.  
JUST DO YOUR BEST AND HAVE FUN.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## MONICA SOUTHALL

### RANK

Sgt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

92A Automated  
Logistical Specialist

### HOMETOWN

Suffolk, Virginia

### CURRENT LOCATION

Henrico, Virginia

### SCHOOL(S)

Virginia State University,  
University of Phoenix

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Right knee, partially torn anterior  
cruciate ligament (ACL)  
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder  
(PTSD)

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Afghanistan, 2009

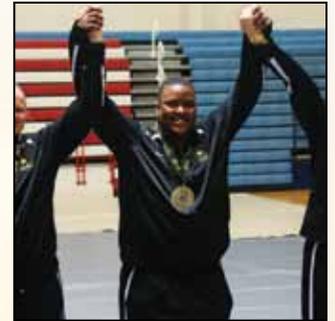
### EVENT(S)

Field/Sitting Volleyball



After graduating college in 2001 Veteran Sgt. Monica Southall felt the burden of student loans and signed on with the U.S. Army, taking advantage of its student loan repayment program. The Suffolk, Virginia native served in Iraq and then Afghanistan where, in 2009, she suffered a fall from atop a Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle, leading to a host of injuries, in addition to Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.

Upon returning home from Afghanistan, Southall became isolated as a result of her depression, seldom venturing out or interacting with others. She eventually discovered adaptive sports, and became a central figure in Team Army competition, including the 2015 Warrior Games, as well as representing the United States at the 2014 Invictus Games in London and 2016 Invictus Games in Orlando.



"Adaptive sports has given me a reason to enjoy life again," says Southall, who goes out of her way in sharing her story with others, especially those facing a similar situation to hers and who might benefit from athletics.

Adaptive sports also keeps her physically active and aids in her recovery. Alongside her throughout the recovery has been Southall's friends and family. "They were always there for me, giving me encouragement when I was dealing with a lot of pain and felt like giving up," said Southall.

Having retired from the Army in 2013, Southall returned to school, completing a Masters in Criminal Justice.

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**“ I ENCOURAGE ANYONE THAT I SEE THAT IF YOU  
HAVEN'T TRIED IT, GIVE IT A TRY, ”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## MICHAEL STEPHENS

### RANK

Spc.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

12B Combat Engineer

### HOMETOWN

Belgrade, Montana

### CURRENT LOCATION

El Paso, Texas

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Loss of sight in one eye

### LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Afghanistan

### EVENT(S)

Cycling/Field/Swimming/Track/  
Wheelchair Basketball



As a combat engineer into a yearlong tour in Afghanistan Spc. Michael Stephens sustained an injury that took his sight in one eye. Regardless of his wounds, the Belgrade, Montana native is quick to point out that he approaches life with both eyes wide open.

Stephens is vigilant in ensuring his overall wellbeing. "I have learned to cope with my injuries and pursue a healthy life style in order to better enjoy my years ahead, all

the while pushing myself to the limits of my abilities," says Stephens.

This mindset extends to adaptive sports. Though blind in only one eye, visually impaired athletes such as Stephens compete wearing blackout goggles in order to maintain an even playing field. "Running with another person or blindfolded was completely new to me," says Stephens. "I give it all I've got, so that's part of the excitement for me, yet I just try and go out there and not fall."

Stephens labels himself a ferocious competitor but contends "It's not about being better than the next person, but putting all of myself into the moment and achieving everything possible."

He credits adaptive sports for "gifting me a breath of life" when he was at his lowest point mentally.

Says Stephens, "Regardless of the method of your injury, someone somewhere can relate to the struggle you have conquered. Compete beside your brothers and sisters with a smile because someone got off the bed and into our world of sports thanks to you."

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**“REMEMBER THAT YOUR INJURY AND THE POWER YOU SHOW IN OVERCOMING IT CAN INSPIRE SOMEONE ELSE WHO KNOWS THE SAME PAIN. REGARDLESS OF THE METHOD OF YOUR INJURY, SOMEONE SOMEWHERE CAN RELATE TO THE STRUGGLE YOU HAVE CONQUERED. COMPETE BESIDE YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS WITH A SMILE BECAUSE SOMEONE GOT OFF THE BED AND INTO OUR WORLD OF SPORTS THANKS TO YOU.”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## RICARDO VILLALOBOS

### RANK

Staff Sgt.

### STATUS

Veteran

### MOS

12B Combat Engineer

### WTU

WTB Fort Benning, Georgia

### HOMETOWN

Lexington, North Carolina

### CURRENT LOCATION

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

### EVENT(S)

Cycling/Swimming



Lexington, North Carolina is located some 200 miles from the Atlantic Ocean. Encompassing 18 square miles and containing fewer than 19,000 resident, its claim to fame is being the so-called barbeque capital of the Tar Heel State, as well as boasting an impressive number of NFL alumni.

Growing up here, Veteran Ricardo Villalobos knew little about boats or

sailing, beyond those scouring the impounded waters of a reservoir noted for its bass fishing located a few miles south of the city.

Introduced to sailing only recently by a non-profit that works to improve the lives of wounded Veterans, Villalobos sailed a 75-foot schooner over the course of ten days from Key West to the Dry Tortugas. "I had never before been on a sailboat. I fell in love with it," said the former Staff Sergeant.

After sustaining his injuries, Villalobos also became enamored with adaptive sports while recovering at Fort Benning, Georgia, Warrior Transition Battalion. A swimmer in high school he instinctively took to the pool in representing Team Army at Warrior Games.

Cycling has also become an important adaptive sports activity while recovering from his combat injuries. "It got me out of my wheelchair," says Villalobos.

Because his Army career ended unexpectedly, Villalobos views the Warrior Games as an opportunity to continue to represent Team Army.

In addition to pursuing gold medals at Warrior Games Villalobos has purchased his own boat (christened Inner Peace) and is seeking to obtain a captain's license.

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**“PUSH YOURSELF AND NEVER GIVE UP. ALWAYS REMEMBER— YOU HAVE TEAMMATES TO YOUR LEFT AND TO YOUR RIGHT THAT WILL PICK YOU UP WHEN YOU ARE DOWN!”**



# 2016 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

## SHAWN VOSBURG

### “BUBBA”

#### RANK

Master Sgt.

#### STATUS

Veteran

#### MOS

88Z Transportation Senior Sergeant

#### WTU

Fort Bliss, Texas

#### HOMETOWN

El Paso, Texas

#### CURRENT LOCATION

El Paso, Texas

#### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Spine, Legs, Shoulder

#### EVENT(S)

Archery/Field/Shooting/  
Sitting Volleyball/  
Wheelchair Basketball



If he hadn't entered Fort Bliss, Texas, Warrior Transition Unit, Master Sgt. Shawn "Bubba" Vosburg would have never discovered adaptive sports. Nor would he have found his love of archery. "Without sounding overly dramatic, it saved my life," says Vosburg. "It gave me a new way to serve and mentor others."

Archery enables Vosburg to focus. "It's an amazing thing," says Vosburg, "It's just you and your bow. It's the same thing with the rifle."

In addition to archery and shooting, Vosburg, a Veteran, is also competing in field events, sitting volleyball and wheelchair basketball. His tale of discovery is a common refrain among wounded, ill and injured Soldiers. "It gives me a way to go on instead of giving up," says Vosburg. "Life goes on after injury and retirement."

Vosburg also views the Warrior Games as a chance to once again represent the Army with pride and commitment saying, "It is the most fulfilling way to end a long career."

A native of El Paso, Texas, Vosburg encourages aspiring athletes to train hard. According to Vosburg "All of the training pays off when you're helping your team to win, and standing on the podium after you've medaled in a competition."

He also cites the stress-relieving qualities of adaptive sports, saying they enable him to take his mind off of his injuries.

Enrolled at University of Texas, El Paso, Vosburg is working towards a master's in social work in order to assist Veterans afflicted with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.

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**“TRAIN HARD AND NEVER GIVE UP. ALL OF THE TRAINING PAYS OFF WHEN YOU'RE HELPING YOUR TEAM TO WIN, AND STANDING ON THE PODIUM AFTER YOU MEDALED IN A COMPETITION.”**





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