



WTU/AW2 Connection

June 2013

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CG Corner

As we look forward to the Army Birthday later this month, what a great time to celebrate the Army's performance at the 2013 Warrior Games. Each of the Soldier-athletes inspired everyone in attendance and set an example of resilience for all WTU Soldiers and cadre with their physical strength, athletic prowess, and sportsmanship. Their dedicated training paid off, as Team Army came just short of the Chairman's Cup, finishing second in the overall medal count.



*BG David J. Bishop,
Commander, U.S. Army
Warrior Transition Command
and Assistant Surgeon
General for Warrior Care
and Transition*

Team Army beat its 2012 medal count by 18 (81 medals this year compared to 63 in 2012). I am confident that Team Army's example will motivate each of the other services to up their game in the future. With continued emphasis in the value of adaptive reconditioning and adaptive sports across the Warrior Care and Transition Program, including the exceptional training and selection camps the Army conducted over the past year, I also believe that Team Army athletes will continue to improve and win the Chairman's Cup in 2014.

Highlight's of Team Army's 81-medal performance included:

- 33 Gold, 26 Silver, 22 Bronze
- Wheelchair basketball – Team Army took Gold for the third year in a row
- Shooting – Team Army nearly tripled last year's medal count (3 medals last year, 8 this year)
- Sitting volleyball – After a hard-fought effort against the Marine Corps, Team Army won the Silver medal
- Track and field – Team Army won 33 medals, including a thrilling come-from-behind effort to win Gold in the 4x100 relay
- Archery – Team Army dominated, winning 6 of 8 possible medals
- Cycling – Team Army won 9 medals overall – with our female athletes sweeping the medal stand
- Swimming– With the Warrior Transition Command's LTC Danny Dudek leading the way with 4 Gold and 1 Silver medal, Team Army came away with a total of 13 Gold, 8 Silver, and 2 Bronze medals

Read more about Team Army's performance on the WTC blog:
<http://wtc.armylive.dodlive.mil/tag/warrior-games/>

Adaptive reconditioning programs are about much more than just Warrior

Games— losing limbs, being severely burned, suffering a traumatic brain injury, experiencing post traumatic stress are all life-changing events with real impact on the wounded, ill or injured Soldiers we support. Often, however, the state-of-the-art medical innovations that help save lives and help put Soldiers back together are not enough when it comes to coming to grips with these profound changes. As part of the Army's ongoing commitment to take care of its men and women in uniform, adaptive reconditioning at the WTUs emphasizes how much wounded, ill or injured Soldiers can still accomplish and the Army's commitment to empowering them to move forward with their lives. The confidence they gain from mastering a recumbent bike or learning to play wheelchair basketball extends to their physical, social, spiritual, Family, emotional, and career goals.

Once again, WTC played a key role in Warrior Games, including:

1) Maximizing the opportunity to introduce as many wounded, ill, or injured Soldiers to adaptive reconditioning as possible. One way we accomplished this was by hosting 17 training and selection clinics throughout the year, compared to five for 2012. At these clinics, Soldiers received training in the flagship sports for the Warrior Games. Each of the 325 Soldiers who applied trained in at least three events, and this year, world class Olympic and Paralympic coaches worked with our athletes.

2) Inspiring as many wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers as possible to recognize their full potential and focus on more than just their injuries. Wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers throughout the WCTP saw our Army athletes outperform at the competition. Our diverse Army team consisted of 29 Soldiers and 21 Veterans, with 22 combat wounded and 7 with behavioral health conditions. The resilience, strength and determination of these Soldier-athletes serve as a symbol of hope for many overcoming obstacles regardless of their injury or illness.

3) Fielding a great team to represent the Army in competition and enhance Army esprit de corps. This year, with more selection and training camps, we ensured a strong Army team capable of competing with the best athletes from all of the services. Our Army wheelchair basketball team dominated the court and took home the Gold for the third year in a row, and they're just one example of the competitive outcomes our team achieved throughout the week.

4) Providing hope to every newly-wounded Soldier who returns from Afghanistan, so they can realize that their injuries are not life-ending. When Soldiers see our Army athletes or others like them, they recognize the potential for a bright and fulfilling future.

I want to recognize a great NCO, MSG Jarrett Jongema, who managed the Army team selection and the 17 clinics. This fantastic leader was severely wounded by a suicide bomber in Iraq. His exceptional service represents the very core of the Army spirit, and he is a prime example of why we have the Continuation on Active Duty (COAD) program. His orders were just extended for two years, and I look forward to continuing to serve with him.

At Warrior Games, in the clinics leading up to Warrior Games, and in talking with Warrior Transition Unit Commanders and Soldiers, I often hear a frequent and recurring theme: participating in adaptive reconditioning activities, athletics, and the life-coaching experiences of the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program gives Soldiers the nudge they need to get back into living. These activities play a vital role in allowing Soldiers to unleash their unlimited potential and focus on something more than their injuries. I encourage all WTU Soldiers to work with their Triad of Care and multidisciplinary teams to explore how adaptive reconditioning can enhance their own recovery plans.

CSM Corner

The summer months are here again! I encourage all of you to get out and enjoy the nice weather wherever you may be. Many of our medical treatment facilities throughout the world are being built off of evidence-based design. Research proves that spending time outside and around nature is important to the healing process, so get out and enjoy the nice weather. Most of the units have programs and trips to get Soldiers and Families out, so take advantage and enjoy what is offered!



*CSM Mark Dennis, U.S. Army
Warrior Transition Command*

The 2013 Warrior Games took place May 10-17 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The preparation for this year's games began almost immediately after last year's games ended. The Warrior Transition Command G3 staff and Adaptive Sports team worked hard in preparation for this event. They started with more than 300 Soldiers and Veterans applying and through a host of competitions and camps, 50 athletes were selected to participate. I'd like to congratulate all the athletes, and especially the Army team for their inspirational performances in all of this year's events. As demonstrated throughout Warrior Games, adaptive sports and exercise are important in our overall health, so take the time to get some type of activity every day.

Lastly, I encourage all of you (Soldiers and Family members) to engage your Warrior Transition Unit teams for any and all questions you have about transition and the opportunities and entitlements available to you. We travel to many different locations and meet with Soldiers and Families at all locations. I always encourage the Family team to use all assets the Army and Veterans Affairs (VA) have made available. The Triads of Leadership, Triads of Care, the Soldier and Family Assistance Centers, the VA assets, transition counselors, Ombudsman, your Town Hall meetings, the list goes on for forums and assets you have to answer questions you have. Take advantage of everything offered to you to make transition easier on you and your family. Thanks for what you have done, continue to do, and will do in the future!! All the way!

AW2 Update

Along with spring weather and baseball, that means it's time for the Warrior Games! The Warrior Games are near and dear to the heart of the Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2) for several reasons. First and foremost, they provide a clear example of the resilience and excellence of the American servicemember, regardless of the setbacks caused by wounds, illnesses, or injuries and demonstrates the resolve of the Armed Services to provide our wounded warriors the best care, support and opportunities to excel. Of particular pride to AW2 is the fact that 27 of the 50 members of the Army team were also AW2 members: 16 AW2 Veterans, eight AW2 Soldiers from Warrior Transition Units (WTUs) and three from the Continuation on Active Duty (COAD) program.



*COL Colin Greene,
Director of U.S. Army
Wounded Warrior Program
(AW2)*

One AW2 team member also serves as an Advocate. The AW2 program congratulates these men and women for meeting the exacting standards for making the Army team. The Warrior Games was once again a moving event and we very much

The benefits of adaptive sports, such as those on display at the Warrior Games, are well established. Physical fitness is only one result; gains in morale, self-confidence and performance in other areas are known and demonstrated throughout the WTU system. That being said, there is more to adaptive reconditioning than adaptive sports. Additional adaptive fields include art in its various forms, music, writing or composing, film-making, photography, equine and other animal-based activities, various outdoor pursuits, inventing, teaching and spiritual practices. These are among the options that should be considered for our Soldiers and Veterans to assist in their recovery, skills development and general well-being. There is at least anecdotal evidence that a number of these fields may be helpful to our wounded, ill or injured, if conducted in coordination with the caregiver team. Many are already taking place at WTUs and other locations.

As with adaptive sports, these other activities can be made available to individuals with disabilities with appropriate adaptations. Amazing artwork has been produced by individuals confined to wheelchairs; W.R. Dawes became a leading British astronomer despite severe nearsightedness; Ray Charles, Doc Watson, and others have shown blindness does not stop musical talent, and even progressive deafness didn't stop Beethoven from composing the world-famous Ninth Symphony. I believe any number of talents exist in our Soldier and Veteran populations, waiting for the right opportunity to emerge and flourish. I challenge the AW2 Advocates, both in WTUs and in the communities, to redouble your efforts to seek out activities that might interest our Soldiers and Veterans, and that may be used to their advantage as an adaptive reconditioning tool. I likewise charge the AW2 Headquarters sections to be alert to, and to share opportunities in, these areas, and to remain acquainted with emerging studies and research demonstrating the benefits of the full range of adaptive reconditioning, for the benefit of all Soldiers, Veterans, Families and Caregivers.

AW2 Advocate Spotlight: Jon Arnold Finds “Sense of Community” Enhances Adaptive Sports and Reconditioning Participation

By Sarah Greer Bartnick, WTC Stratcom

AW2 Advocate Jon Arnold believes there's a sense of community when you put Soldiers with similar injuries and similar experiences in the same place for physical therapy and occupational therapy. “The relationships formed go much further than any formal program,” explained the Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) AW2 Advocate. “We're inspired by each other, and the lifelong bonds are indescribable.”

Arnold understands that bond. After losing his right leg below the knee from an improvised explosive device attack in Iraq in 2006, Arnold spent his own recovery at BAMC, and was among the first patients to use the Center for the Intrepid. Like thousands of wounded, ill or injured Soldiers and Veterans, adaptive sports and reconditioning activities impacted his recovery. It all started at Sea World's “All Can Ski” day for servicemembers and children with physical disabilities. “By the end of the day, everyone had gotten up and water skied a little bit,” he explained. “I grew up in California, playing watersports, but I couldn't get up on my first pull. When I was up, all the barriers fell away. I started thinking about what else I could achieve.”

Adaptive cycling enables him to spend time with his Family, a point he emphasizes with the Soldiers and Veterans on his AW2 caseload. “It's a quality activity we're all doing together, where we get good conversations,” he says of

the neighborhood rides with this wife and two teenagers. "When I first got hurt, my wife made the mistake of saying she'd do any sports activities I wanted to try," he added. "Now, she's into cycling, too and we're going to torture the kids with a 10K or something soon."

In working with newly injured Soldiers at BAMC, Arnold emphasizes that sense of community and encourages all wounded, ill or injured Soldiers to embrace their peers and the advice they can share. "Take a moment and watch what's going on around you," he said. "If you're having an off day or wake up groggy and frustrated, look for someone else reaching a milestone. You see it all the time at the hospital, and it's a great reminder of who we are as Soldiers."



The 2013 Warrior Games Army team in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Cadre Spotlight

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Warrior Transition Brigade Adaptive Reconditioning Best Practices

By Emily D. Anderson, WTC Stratcom

The Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) Warrior Transition Brigade adaptive reconditioning program has implemented individualized assessments for wounded, ill or injured Soldier's as an additional tool to assist in the rehabilitation process.

"The assessments are done to ensure the program is effective," said Shawn Kwak, physical therapist and the adaptive reconditioning program manager at the WRNMMC Warrior Transition Brigade. "We expect to see improvements, but if we are seeing the same results between the first and second assessment, it gives us a chance to recalibrate the plan."

According to Kwak, the assessments occur during the Soldier's initial session and two additional assessments at three- to four-month increments.

"The assessments are not a perfect solution, but it keeps us accountable and knowledgeable about what's effective for the Soldier," he added. "It gives us a chance to review their plan, promote an active lifestyle and mitigate injuries."

The first assessment identifies the Soldier's expectations, goals and determines baseline functional capabilities in body composition, cardio respiratory, muscular endurance and muscular strength.

The second assessment is a check to see if the Soldier's program is effective,

and the final assessment focuses on the Soldier's post injury activities, provides measurements to ensure the Soldier is able to meet his or her goals and able to integrate activity as part of his/her lifestyle.

"There are three assessments that occur during the entire cycle which lasts about six months," Kwak said. "It's about tailoring the physical activity to the Soldier's individual needs and ensuring they're in the right activity that will promote an active lifestyle without causing more pain or injury."

The adaptive reconditioning program was developed to optimize a Soldier's overall well-being by promoting the healing process while mitigating risk of injury/re-injury to support the Soldiers in achieving their short and long-term Comprehensive Transition Plan goals.

"This program maximizes their potential," he added. "It's a partnership because the Soldier has to be proactive and have goals, and we are here to provide support."

All Soldiers assigned to a Warrior Transition Unit who have been medically cleared participate in the adaptive reconditioning program that encompasses various activities including, but not limited to gym/clinic-based exercise programs, adaptive sports, doctrinal physical readiness training exercises, and human performance optimization.

"The Soldier's job is to heal, maintain independence, and actively focus on returning to their previous level of function," Kwak said.

Did You Know...

Policy Update

WTC published four policies effective 18 March 2013.

They are:

(1) Work Site Selection. A Career and Education Readiness work site is where a Soldier participates in a work activity that aligns with the Soldier's Comprehensive Transition Plan track and supports the Soldier's long-term career goals.

(2) Assignment of Geographically Dispersed Personnel to Warrior Transition Units (WTU). To establish procedural guidance regarding WTU acceptance of military personnel assigned or attached to geographically dispersed units that are not based on an installation with a Senior Commander and Medical Treatment Facility Commander.

(3) Appeal Process for Special Compensation for Assistance with Activities of Daily Living (SCAADL) Determinations. To provide procedural guidance regarding the appellate process, final adjudication and disposition of applications from Soldiers applying for compensation under the SCAADL program.

(4) Exemption for Warrior Transition Unit Cadre to Professional Filler System (PROFIS), Medical Augmentee, and Individual Assignments (MED AUG and IA). To establish policy to support the intent of MILPER Message 12-006, WTU Cadre Assignments, by stabilizing WTU cadre personnel and prohibiting their assignment to PROFIS or PROFIS Deployment System (PDS), MED AUG and IA requirements.

Policies can be found at <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/wtucadre>. If not already a milSuite member, a milSuite account would need to be created. To access the policies and/or create a milSuite account, follow these steps:

1. Open the following URL: <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/wtucadre>.
2. If not yet logged in to milBook, you will be required to authenticate. Click on the I AGREE button and, if prompted, select your CAC certificate and enter your pin #.
3. If you already have a milSuite account, skip to step 5. Otherwise, click on the link that reads Click here to register! Your personal information will be pulled automatically from DEERS. If all data appears correct, click on Create New Account.
4. You will receive a confirmation page stating that you have successfully created a milSuite account! At this time, you will need to reenter the URL found above.
5. Before you can view any site content, you will need to be approved to join the group. Click on Ask to join this group on the right-hand side of the page.
6. You will receive an email notification when your membership has been approved. Use the URL above; also found in the email you will receive, to access the portal.

A Closer Look at the Warrior Games

Vivian Robinson, Warrior Transition Command

Two hundred and sixty wounded, ill or injured service personnel from all branches of the U.S. Military participated in the 2013 Warrior Games being held 11-17 May 2013 at the US Olympic Training Center and the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo. The athletes include US Service Members (from Army, Navy, Air Force, SOCOM as well as Coastguard and Reserves) who are recovering from visual impairments, Traumatic Brain injuries, Post- Traumatic Stress, serious illnesses, upper- body injuries, lower- body injuries and spinal cord injuries. Warrior Games not only fosters a competitive spirit in these athletes, but helps them develop new capabilities to overcome their disabilities, illnesses and injuries.

This year marked the fourth Warrior Games. The path to the 2013 Warriors Games for U.S. Army personnel began at Fort Benning on August 18, 2012, when the first Adaptive Reconditioning Training and Selection Camp were conducted. Another 16 camps have been held since August 2013 and were followed by pre-games training during 1- 10 May 2013 at Fort Carson. During the training and selection camps as well as during Warrior Games, Army athletes received specialized assistance and support from a Triad of Competition which includes a coach, medical employee and CSF- Prep performance enhancement specialist. Each member of the Triad of Competition has an important job to do. The coach maximized each athletes' performance using specialized knowledge of sports, the medical employee helped the Soldier apply specific movements to a sport based on their particular medical condition, and the CSF-Prep performance enhancement specialist helped the athlete use mental skills training to generate the right thoughts and feelings prior to a sporting event so that the Soldier can do their best during a competition. Whether at a training or selection camp or during Warrior Games, the Triad of Competition is concerned with providing specialized assistance and support to Soldier athletes to ensure their success.

The Warrior Games was created in 2010 as an introduction to Paralympics for injured servicemembers and Veterans. The Army Adaptive Reconditioning Program works in concert with this same Paralympics Military Program to build related activities and sports programs into the treatment and recovery plans of WTU Soldiers. While Warrior Games might be a dream for some, it certainly is the "icing on the cake" for those WTU Soldiers who in spite of physical or emotional challenges are able to achieve their goal for future recovery.

WTU Spotlight

Adaptive Sports Aid Soldier's Recovery

Maria Gallegos, Brooke Army Medical Center Public Affairs

Spc. Ryan McIntosh was an avid athlete who was heavily involved with sports throughout high school. He competed in track and played football – even semi-professional football.

After high school, McIntosh joined the Army in 2010 as an infantryman and deployed to Afghanistan shortly after he graduated from basic training in Colorado in April 2010. Everything was going well as planned until one day, unexpectedly, his life changed forever.

Just two months into deployment, he was out on a routine foot patrol when he stepped on a land mine – ultimately resulting in amputation to his right leg below the knee. He was treated at Brooke Army Medical Center since the incident and rehabilitating at the Center for the Intrepid.

At first, McIntosh was not sure about jumping back into sports due to his injuries, but with friends' persistence, he gave sitting volleyball a try. Ever since then, he has been participating in most, if not all adaptive sports for wounded warriors.

"From the beginning, I wanted to get back on my feet as quickly as I could," said McIntosh. "I'd always been athlete, -- it was a passion of mine. When I got hurt, I lost track of it -- thinking I'm not able to do what I used to do because I got hurt.

"After two months into my recovery, I reluctantly gave sitting volleyball a try," he continued. "I was hooked ... that transitioned into finding every sport that I could possible to play, and then I started the wheelchair basketball that led me to running track."

McIntosh continued to get involved with different sports and realizing every time he participated, he felt like he "is the same person, before the injury." "I felt that I was still competitive ... I was still athletic ... that didn't change because I lost my leg. It just propelled me to work harder to do what I wanted to do," McIntosh said.

That endurance and stigma led him to compete in the 2012 Army Warrior Games. He took home the gold medal in wheelchair basketball, silver medals in two track events, and a bronze medal in swimming. "I was honored and excited to be given the opportunity to compete among the top athletes across the country," said McIntosh.

Even though he was considered unfit for duty after his medical evaluation board, he remains active duty on the Continuation on Active Duty, or COAD, a program that provides an opportunity for wounded warriors to continue to serve in the Army on active duty or on active reserve.

"I know I can't do the job I used to do, but I can still help the Army," he said. McIntosh is now the Adaptive Sports noncommissioned officer in charge with Brooke Army Medical Center Warrior Transition Battalion. In this position, he helps Soldiers get back to sports and stay physically fit at all levels - from competition training to reconditioning Soldiers to learn new ways of playing sports with their children.

"I have the passion for what I do because I see what it did for me. I recovered because when I was hurt, I was in a state that I thought I couldn't do anything ... but once I got into sports ... it helped me mentally, physically and emotionally to just get back into the lifestyle before I got hurt," said McIntosh. "I'm helping others to have an open mind and not let their injuries get in the way to get back to normal." McIntosh competed in the 2013 Warrior Games at

Colorado Springs, Colo., May 11-16.

"I was honored to be selected again. This year though, I was more mentally prepared ... I upped my training regimen just because I didn't want to get behind other services, and I trained harder to get ahead from last year," he said. McIntosh won gold medals in 7 of his 8 events at this year's Warrior Games.

Studies show disabled Veterans who participate in adaptive sports have less stress, reduced dependency on pain and depression medication, and higher achievement in education and employment.

Stratcom Update WTC Stratcom Update: The 2013 Warrior Games

Cait McCarrie, Stratcom, Warrior Transition Command

This month we focus our attention on adaptive reconditioning, and no event embodies the power of adaptive sports and reconditioning better than the Warrior Games. This year's competition took place in Colorado Springs, Colo. May 11-16. Wounded, ill or injured servicemembers joined forces and competed for the gold in archery, cycling, sitting volleyball, swimming, shooting, track & field, and wheelchair basketball. Gold, silver and bronze medals were awarded to the athletes or team members who placed 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in their events respectively. The Marine Corps won the most medals received the Chairman's Cup.

This year's Army team consisted of 50 wounded, ill or injured Soldiers and Veterans who successfully integrated adaptive reconditioning into their recovery and transition. Adaptive reconditioning encompasses a wide variety of activities, and can be a great asset in one's spiritual, emotional and physical recovery. The skills that wounded warriors gain on the battlefield are transferable and relevant in the sports arena. Benefits include stress management techniques, reduced dependency on pain and depression medication, higher achievement in education and employment, increased independence and increased mobility. Adaptive reconditioning is a powerful part of a successful recovery and can play a pivotal role in a Soldier's Comprehensive Transition Plan (CTP). Soldiers recovering at Warrior Transition Units often integrate physical activity into their CTP, and at this year's Warrior Games, the world will see the power of adaptive reconditioning.

No two stories of recovery and transition are alike, and athletes like those we see at the Warrior Games employ the most powerful components of adaptive reconditioning in their own path to recovery. Whether they are team building exercises, learning how to use a new piece of equipment, or learning a new sport entirely, adaptive reconditioning activities are a way to connect one's physical and emotional needs.

The Warrior Transition Command provided up-to-date information on this year's competition and would like to extend special congratulations to all 50 Army athletes who competed this year. Your dedication and perseverance is truly inspiring. Visit our Facebook page www.Facebook.com/ArmyWTC, Twitter page www.Twitter.com/armyWTC, Flickr page www.flickr.com/photos/ArmyWTC/, and website http://www.WTC.army.mil/about_us/warriorgames2013.html for stories and photos from this year's event.

Make sure to visit the WTC website <http://www.WTC.army.mil> and blog <http://WTC.armylive.dodlive.mil> for resources, information, and stories for wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers, Veterans, Families, and Caregivers.

Providing the most accurate information on warrior care is our mission not only during Warrior Care month, but every month. If you have any information you would like to share, please contact us at warriorcarecommunications@conus.army.mil.

We Want to Hear From You...

WTU/CBWTU Cadre Collaboration Portal now LIVE

The Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) and Community Based Warrior Transition Unit (CBWTU) Cadre Collaboration Portal is now "LIVE" on milBook. This site was developed as a secure online method for the WTC staff and WTU cadre to collaborate, exchange information, share best practices, and store knowledge. It is available at <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/wtucadre> and also includes links to the WTC PCM Forum, NCM Professional Forum, and WTC TC Group.

Follow the directions below to access the Cadre Collaboration Portal:

1. Open the following URL: <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/wtucadre>
2. If not yet logged in to milBook, you will be required to authenticate. Click on the 'I AGREE' button and, if prompted, select your CAC certificate and enter your pin number.
3. If you already have a milSuite account, skip to step 5. Otherwise, click on the link that reads 'Click here to register!' Your personal information will be pulled automatically from DEERS. If all data appears correct, click on 'Create New Account'.
4. You will receive a confirmation page stating that 'You have successfully created a milSuite account!' At this time, you will need to reenter the URL found above.
5. Before you can view any site content, you will need to be approved to join the group. Click on 'Ask to join this group' on the right-hand side of the page.
6. You will receive an email notification when your membership has been approved.
7. Use the URL above; also found in the email you will receive, to access the portal.

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US Army Warrior Transition Command
Wounded Soldier Family Hotline: 1-800-984-8523
Online www.WTC.army.mil Blog <https://WTC.armylive.dodlive.mil>