



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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By Anna Eisenberg  
Warrior Transition Command

## **A fighter's sport: Army A team sweeps preliminaries at 2014 U.S. Army Warrior Trials**

**West Point, New York** — Cheers from Gillis Field House's multi-purpose stadium reached the parking lot as Army and Air Force squared off at the 2014 U.S. Army Warrior Trials wheelchair basketball preliminaries last night (June 16). Screams of support and chants from both sides hovered over the players in a constant din as Army Green won with a 30-10 point lead.

"They did excellent. They passed the ball well and worked together as a team," said coach Jermell Penne of his team's victory.

Army B Team lost to the Marines 12-14 following the sweep against the Air Force. "I gave it my best shot. It was good to play with all the guys," said Master Sgt. Rhoden Galloway of Team Army's game against the Marines.

Wheelchair basketball is a fighter's sport. The chair's large wheels slant out like an acute triangle with a third, smaller one at the back to help stabilize the player. The tires are made of a different tread to streamline more seamless movements, and the rider wears a seatbelt—an effort to keep the athlete in the chair as the players slam into each other in attempts to steal the ball or block a shot.

A player still belted in, relying on arm strength alone to flip him or herself over the back of a toppled chair is not an unusual sight. These athletes are powerful. These athletes are persistent.

Tenacious too are the fans, rolling out in waves of Air Force blue on one set of bleachers and Army Green on the next. "Air Force! Air Force!" sang Blue. "Army! Strong! Army! Strong!" came the response.

"We are all one team," said Army Spc. Amanda Lyle, an Army Warrior Trials athlete competing in four other sports. A supporter of this event, she came because "we are all trying out for Team Army for Warrior Games. They supported me in volleyball. Tonight I am here for them."

Rich Jarvitz, an Air Force athlete cheering on Blue, felt comfortable sitting next to Army fans. "We are competitive and we want to win, but we're a big family," he said of the game. "Just being around other wounded, ill and injured service members really helps with my recovery. It ties us together."

The loudest voice in the room, though, belonged to Army Staff Sgt. Sheldon Simmons, a member of the Cadre at the Warrior Transition Unit, Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

"These guys inspire me. They pump me up," he said, taking a brief break from running across the court, the Army flag unfurling above his head.

"I am a Soldier all day every day. It could be me in that wheelchair," Simmons reflected. "It's a competition but it's all in fun. We go to war together—we are all on the same team," he said of the opposing Air Force. Grinning, he reminded the crowd, "right now, though, we're not!"

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**CUTLINE:** Retired Sgt. Matthew Spang, Colorado Springs, Colo., takes advantage of his opponent's fall for a chance to grab the ball from his Air Force opponent during the Wheelchair Basketball game opener June 16 at the 2014 U.S. Army Warrior Trials. Team Army beat the Air Force team. More than 100 Army, Marine Corps and Air Force athletes will compete in archery, cycling, shooting, sitting volleyball, swimming, track and field and wheelchair basketball tournaments June 15-20. The 2014 Army Warrior Trials, hosted by the U.S. Army Warrior Transition Command, help determine which Army athletes will compete at the 2014 Warrior Games this fall in Colorado Springs, Colo. (U.S. Army photo by Gloria Montgomery)

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Warrior Transition Command (WTC) is a major subordinate command under the U.S. Army Medical Command (MEDCOM). WTC's mission is to develop, coordinate and integrate the Army's Warrior Care and Transition Program (WCTP) for wounded, ill and injured soldiers, veterans and their families. For more information on WTC, visit the new WTC website, [www.WTC.army.mil](http://www.WTC.army.mil), follow on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/armyWTC> or join Facebook at <http://facebook.com/armyWTC>.