



Sgt. 1st Class Keith Sanderson of the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program, seen here practicing at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, has been selected for his third U.S. Olympic Team and will compete in the men's 25-meter rapid fire pistol event at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games. (Tim Hippius / Army News Service)

5 NCOS AMONG FIRST 100 ATHLETES NAMED TO U.S. OLYMPIC TEAM

By Tim Hippius

Army News Service

Five noncommissioned officers are among the first 100 athletes named to the U.S. Olympic Team scheduled to compete Aug. 5-21 in the 2016 Olympic Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Rapid-fire pistol shooter Sgt. 1st Class Keith Sanderson, race walker Staff Sgt. John Nunn and modern pentathlete Sgt. Nathan Schrimsher are Soldier-athletes in the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program at Fort Carson, Colorado.

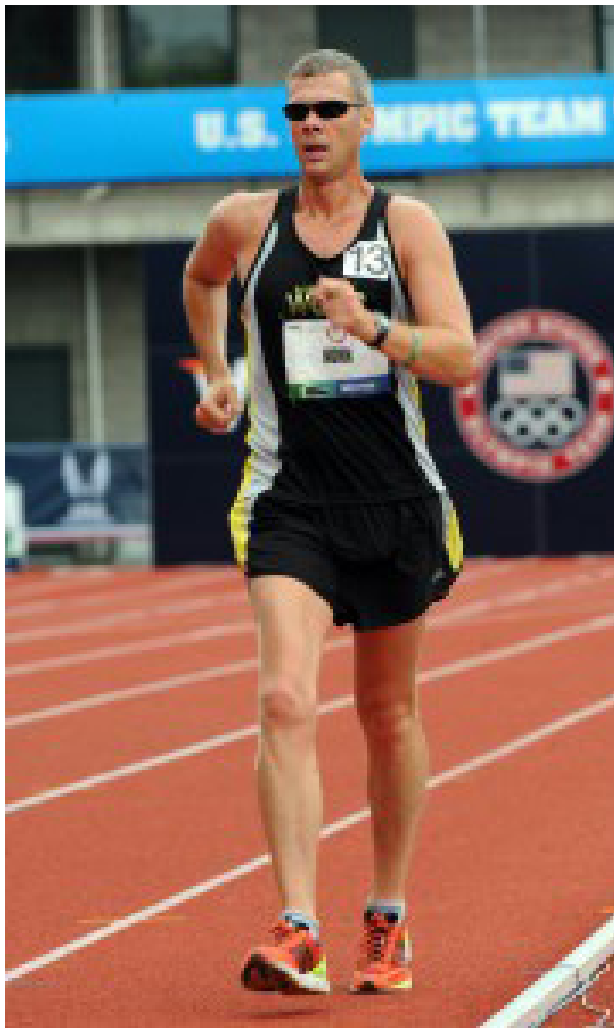
Shotgun shooter Sgt. 1st Class Glenn Eller and rifle shooter Sgt. 1st Class Michael McPhail are Soldier-athletes in the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit at Fort

Benning, Georgia.

Sanderson, 41, a three-time Olympian from San Antonio, Texas, is the most decorated competitive pistol shooter in U.S. military history. He is scheduled to compete Aug. 12-13 in the 25-meter rapid fire pistol event.

"First, I want to make the final," Sanderson said. "Second, make it to the medal round. Third, I want to get a gold medal. I feel like I have to get a gold. I want to be the best U.S. pistol shooter in history."

Sanderson, a nine-time World Cup medalist, finished fifth at the 2008 Beijing Games.



Race walker Staff Sgt. John Nunn of the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program is scheduled to compete in his third Olympics in the 2016 Rio Games. (Tim Hippi / Army News Service)

“Shooting competitively has allowed me to excel in something to the point where, at times, I have become the best in the world,” Sanderson said. “I already have the most World Cups. The only thing I’m missing is that Olympic gold medal.”

Nunn, 38, a native of Evansville, Indiana, who lives in Bonsall, California, also will be competing in his third Olympics. He finished 43rd in the men’s 50-kilometer race walk at the 2012 London Olympic Games with a personal-best time of 4 hours, 3 minutes and 28 seconds.

Earlier this year at the 2016 U.S. Olympic 50K Race Walk Team Trials, Nunn overcame the flu to win the race and improved his personal best to 4:03.21. He also plans to attempt to qualify for the 20-kilometer race walk event at the 2016 U.S. Olympic Track and Field Team Trials on June 30 in Salem, Oregon.

“It would be fun to do both [the 50k and 20k in Rio de Janeiro], but 50K is what I’m good at and what I’ve held the [Olympic] standard for a couple years now,”

Nunn said. “If I happen to hit the 20K standard that’s great. I’ll still make the 50K the priority in Rio and we’ll still race the 20K, but it becomes a great speed workout a week before the 50K, which is fine.”

The Olympic 20-kilometer race walk is scheduled for Aug. 12 at Fort Copacabana and the 50K is set for Aug. 19.

“We’ve had some really good workouts over the past few months where I’ve been able to just nail full through a 35K with a 4:30 pace per kilometer,” Nunn said, “which puts me right at like 3:45 for a 50K. There’s potential to set a huge personal record in Rio.”



Sgt. Nathan Schrimsher, 23, will make his Olympic debut in modern pentathlon, a five-sport event consisting of fencing, swimming, equestrian show jumping, cross-country running and pistol shooting on Aug. 18 at Fort Copacabana in Rio de Janeiro. (Tim Hippi / Army News Service)

Schrimsher, 23, a native of Roswell, New Mexico, now stationed at Fort Carson, will make his Olympic debut in modern pentathlon, a five-sport event consisting of fencing, swimming, equestrian show jumping, cross-country running and pistol shooting. After getting started in the sport at age 12, he soon began dreaming of becoming an Olympian. After three successful appearances in the Modern Pentathlon Junior World Championships, Schrimsher quickly climbed the ranks of the U.S. men’s senior division.

In July 2015, Schrimsher was the first individual named to the 2016 U.S. Olympic Team after he finished third at the Pan American Games in Toronto to earn a berth in the 2016 Rio Games.

“A lot of people were telling me that I could relax because I didn’t have the pressure of qualifying anymore,” Schrimsher recalled. “But now the pressure to compete, and go win that gold, that’s on. It’s another set of pressure, but I’m ready for it.”

“I just want to go and compete and do the best I can,” continued Schrimsher, who is scheduled to compete Aug. 18 and 20 in Rio. “I just feel like regular old Nathan



U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit shotgun shooter Sgt. 1st Class Glenn Eller shoots during the opening round of Olympic men's double trap qualification at the Royal Artillery Barracks range at the 2012 London Games. Eller, the 2008 Olympic gold medalist, is scheduled to compete in his fifth Olympics at the 2016 Rio Games. (Tim Hipps / Army News Service)

from New Mexico, just doing my thing. I'm going to give it my best like I've always done."

Schrimsher upped the ante May 7 by posting the best American men's performance in eight years on the Modern Pentathlon World Cup circuit with a seventh-place finish in the 2016 UIPM World Cup season finale in Sarasota, Florida. The last time a U.S. competitor placed higher was at the 2008 World Cup final, when Air Force Capt. Eli Bremer won the bronze medal and U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program teammate Sgt. Dennis Bowsher was fourth.

Schrimsher competed in the 2010 Youth Olympic Games in Singapore, where he finished 13th. In March, he won the gold medal at the Pan American and South American Championships in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where his younger brother, also an Olympic hopeful, struck bronze.

"It's amazing to be a Soldier and compete for the United States," Schrimsher said. "It's a big name we wear as athletes and I just want to represent it as best I can."

Eller, 34, a native of Houston, will be competing in his fifth Olympics. He won the gold medal for double trap at the 2008 Beijing Games. Eller was named USA Shooting's Athlete of the Year in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2008 and 2013. In 2012, he deployed to Afghanistan as a marksmanship instructor after competing in the London



Sgt. 1st Class Michael McPhail leaves the shooting line after competing in the 2015 Pan American Games in Toronto, Canada. McPhail is scheduled to compete Aug. 15 in the men's 50-meter prone rifle event at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games in Brazil. (Tim Hipps / Army News Service)

Olympics. He is scheduled to compete Aug. 10 in Rio.

McPhail, 34, originally from Darlington, Wisconsin, missed making the prone rifle finals by three-tenths of a point at the 2012 London Olympics. He has won 10 medals in international competition, including two World Cup victories in 2015. McPhail is scheduled to compete Aug. 12 in the men's 50-meter prone rifle event.

More Soldier-athletes and coaches remain in contention for spots on Team USA in shooting, rugby and track and field. Those selections will be made by late July.



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