

# 26 NCOs Part of U.S. Service Member, Veteran Contingent Competing At Invictus Games

By Pablo Villa - NCO Journal

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Sgt. Stefan LeRoy was on a routine patrol June 7, 2012, with a small group of cavalry scouts in Afghanistan when disaster struck.

Two of LeRoy's fellow Soldiers — his friends — detonated a pair of improvised explosive devices. LeRoy rushed to his fallen comrades, picking one of them up to take him back to safety. In his dash to the helicopter, he stepped on another IED. LeRoy lost both of his legs, but not his indefatigable spirit.

Three months after the blast, LeRoy started cycling as a way to stay fit and motivated. His father's love of cycling contributed heavily in his recovery.

"My dad is a big cyclist, and we were able to cycle together," LeRoy told the Army News Service in April 2015. "He was able to do it with me, and that made me more dedicated than I would have been otherwise."

It wasn't long before LeRoy began competing, and succeeding, against fellow Soldiers in his newfound sport. This week, his talent is on display during the 2016 Invictus Games. Now retired, LeRoy is one of 26 U.S. Army NCOs taking part in the international Paralympic-style, multi-sport event, which allows wounded, injured or sick armed services personnel and veterans to compete.

The Invictus Games are the brainchild of Prince Harry of Wales, who was inspired to create the event after watching the 2013 U.S. Warrior Games in Colorado. The name Invictus is Latin for "Unconquered, Undefeated." The prince's aim was for the Games to "demonstrate the power of sport to inspire recovery, support rehabilitation and demonstrate life beyond disability." The first edition of the Invictus Games was held Sept. 10-14, 2014, at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London.

This year's Games are being held at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex in Orlando, Florida. Soldiers and veterans from all U.S. military branches will compete against counterparts from 14 countries in the event, which kicked off Sunday with an opening ceremony that was nationally televised on ESPN2. The network will broadcast more than 40 hours of events on its ESPN2 channel and online at ESPN3.com during the next four days. Competition concludes Thursday and the closing ceremonies will be broadcast live on ESPN2 at 7 p.m. EST.

For LeRoy, the competition is more than another hurdle in his recovery, it is a way to honor his fellow fallen Soldiers.

"In the military, we know that the strength of one comes from the strength of many," he said in an Invictus Games video. "We never leave a fellow Soldier behind. I lost my legs in Afghanistan carrying others to safety. Now it is their memory, their courage, their sacrifice that carries me. And I will never let them down."

## **NCOs at the Invictus Games**

A list of Army noncommissioned officers competing with the United States team at the 2016 Invictus Games in Orlando, Florida:

- **Staff Sgt. Ashley Anderson:** Swimming.
- **Retired Sgt. 1st Class Chuck Armstead:** Wheelchair basketball.
- **Sgt. 1st Class Allan Armstrong:** Swimming, track and field, cycling.
- **Staff Sgt. Robert Brown:** Track and field.
- **Master Sgt. Rhoden Galloway:** Swimming.

- **Retired Sgt. Robbie Gaupp:** Track and field, sitting volleyball.
- **Retired Staff Sgt. Randi Gavell:** Swimming and track and field.
- **Staff Sgt. Robert Green:** Track and field.
- **Retired Sgt. Sean Hook:** Track and field, archery, indoor rowing.
- **Retired Staff Sgt. Michael Kacer:** Swimming, track and field, indoor rowing.
- **Sgt. 1st Class Katie Kuiper:** Track and field, cycling.
- **Retired Sgt. Stefan LeRoy:** Swimming, track and field.
- **Sgt. Ryan Major:** Track and field, indoor rowing, wheelchair rugby.
- **Sgt. Ana Manciaz:** Archery, swimming, cycling, track and field.
- **Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Marks:** Swimming.
- **Retired Staff Sgt. Robert Matthews:** Track and field, cycling.
- **Sgt. 1st Class Michael McPhall:** Swimming, track and field.
- **Retired Staff Sgt. Billy Meeks:** Archery, indoor rowing.
- **Sgt. Kawaiola Nahale:** Swimming.
- **Retired Staff Sgt. Tim Payne:** Swimming, track and field.
- **Staff Sgt. Zed Pitts:** Track and field, cycling.
- **Retired Staff Sgt. Alexander Shaw:** Indoor rowing, sitting volleyball.
- **Sgt. 1st Class Michael Smith:** Track and field.
- **Retired Sgt. Monica Southall:** Track and field, indoor rowing, powerlifting, wheelchair rugby.
- **Sgt. Aaron Stewart:** Cycling, swimming.
- **Retired Sgt. Nicholas Titman:** Swimming, track and field.

Click here (<http://invictusgames2016.org/espn-broadcast-schedule/>) to view the full ESPN broadcast schedule.