

# NCOs, Enlisted Excel in 2015 Sporting Events Worldwide

By David Vergun - Army News Service

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Team Army raises the Chairman's Cup trophy in celebration at the 2015 Department of Defense Warrior Games, June 28, 2015. The Army won the Chairman's Cup after earning 162 medals during the games, earning 141 points towards the Chairman's Cup competition. (Photo by Keith Oliver / U.S. Army)

This year was a great one for Army athletes. Here are just some of the highlights:

## Army Ten-Miler

Pfc. Paul Chelimo, a Kenyan native, led his fellow Soldiers to take the top five male individual spots during the 31st anniversary of the Army Ten-Miler, Oct. 11.

Chelimo placed first with a time of 48:19, beating his time of 51 minutes from last year's race, when he finished in 30th place.

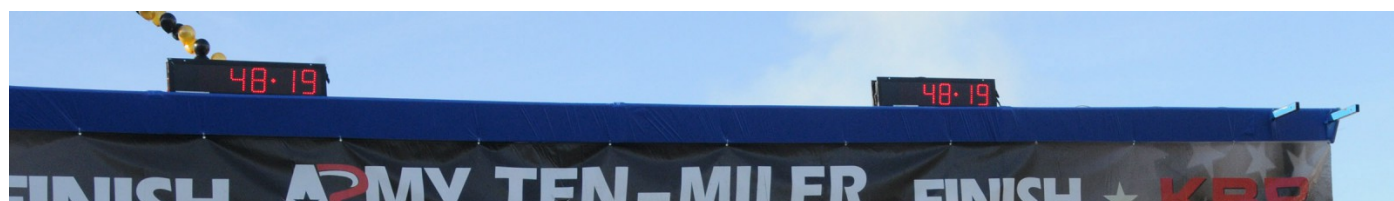
The member of the Army's World Class Athlete Program, or WCAP, said he wouldn't have won without the help of his teammates.

"They're the reason I made it from 30th to first this year," he said, adding he's happy he finished his race season on a win and will be concentrating now on the Olympic trials in July.

"I love the United States, and I want to represent the Army in the Olympics," he said.

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley said that throughout the last 31 years, the Army Ten-Miler has attracted 344,000 runners total. While the 2015 run had more than 30,000 competitors, the first race, back in 1985, had only 1,615.

The general also noted that some 100 wounded warriors, on various types of bicycles, "are leading the race."





Soldiers and teammates Paul Chelimo and Nicholas Kipruto finish the Army Ten-Miler at 48:19 with Chelimo winning by seconds. Their teammate Shadrack Kipchirchir took third, Oct. 11, 2015, near the Pentagon in Arlington, Va. (Photo by Shannon Collins / U.S. Army)

## DOD Warrior Games

The Army ruled almost every category on its way to grabbing the Chairman's Cup for the second straight year at the 2015 Department of Defense Warrior Games held on Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, the last week of June.

"That very first event, cycling, is what really brought this team together," said Sgt. 1st Class Keoki Smythe, the noncommissioned officer in charge at the Alexandria-based Warrior Transition Command.

"Then our track athletes and swimmers gave us a huge lead and our archery team had a gold medal sweep," the Seattle native said.

Other events included wheelchair basketball, sitting volleyball and shooting.

Begun in 2010 to test — and showcase — the resilience and adaptability of combat-wounded, ill and injured Soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and coast guardsmen, the first games were dominated by the Marine Corps before the Army surged to a victory last year.

This time, it was a Soldiers' competition from start to finish as the Army notched 69 gold medals to the Marines' 47.

The Army out medaled all competitors in the silver and bronze categories as well, rolling to 141 points for the Chairman's Cup over the Marine Corps' 96. The Air Force, with 65 points total, finished next. The British Armed Forces had 62 points, Special Operations Command had 34 and the Navy/Coast Guard team finished with 30.

Led by team captain Frank Barroqueiro and assistant team captain Samantha Goldenstein, the Army was presented with the monster-sized Chairman's Cup by Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and former Army chief of staff.

In a touch of friendly rivalry, the Army beat a Marine Corps contingent in the presence of the hosts' service chief, then Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Joseph Dunford. Like Dempsey before him, Dunford was to ascend to the chairman's job.

But Dunford was quick to minimize the competition piece in favor of underscoring the healing power and heartfelt nurture brought to bear through the athletes' families, friends, physical therapists and other caregivers — many of whom were in the bleachers for the closing ceremonies.

Smythe also alluded to an almost spiritual intangible that superseded scores, times and photo finishes.

"Truly, it is an honor. I feel very fortunate just to be around these Soldiers, the way they support each other," he said.

## World Games

Team USA athletes who marched into the closing ceremony of the 6th Military World Games in Mungyeong, South Korea, Oct. 11, proudly wore 17 medals earned in competition against more than 100 nations.

Eight of those medals were earned by wounded warriors who competed for the first time in the Conseil International du Sport Militaire, or CISM, World Games. Although para-athletics and para-archery were deemed demonstration sports for their debut in the games, no difference from other award ceremonies could be seen in the stadium.

During the ceremonies, troops from all nations saluted as the stars and stripes were raised and the sound of the national anthem filled the venue. USA's Chief of Delegation Steven Dinote said he was extremely proud of the para-athletes, who earned medals in every one of the sports they entered.

All of the USA athletes represented the Department of Defense and the United States well, Dinote said. "They are Soldiers, Marines, sailors, airmen and coast guardsmen first and foremost, yet they have the extraordinary ability to reach such an elite level and perform on the world stage in an event that is second only to the Olympic Games," he said.

The CISM World Games are held every four years, one year before the Olympic Summer Games. This year, Team USA won gold in women's sailing and formation skydiving, as well as silver in Greco-Roman wrestling. The women's golf team earned a silver medal, the men's golf team earned bronze, and USA women earned a bronze team medal in the marathon.

The 2015 CISM Military World Games was one of the largest delegations that U.S. Armed Forces Sports sent overseas since the 1999 Games in Zagreb, Croatia, Dinote said. The total delegation size of 240 included 165 athletes, along with 75 coaches and staff, and medical teams.

"During the two weeks during the games, it was our mission to give them the experience of a lifetime and treat them all like the World-Class Athletes they are," Dinote said.

## **Pan Am Games**

WCAP Soldier-athletes won two gold, one silver and five bronze medals as members of Team USA at the 2015 Pan American Games in Toronto.

The games ended July 19 after 17 days of competition between nearly 7,000 athletes representing all 41 nations of the Pan American Sports Organization, which includes the Caribbean, Latin America, North America and South America. The games featured 39 sports, including all 28 sports on the Olympic program. Team USA topped the medal chart in every category, leading all nations with 265 medals, including 103 gold, 81 silver and 81 bronze medals.

The Army also sent two coaches to the games. WCAP boxing coach Staff Sgt. Joseph Guzman helped lead Team USA boxers to five medals in the ring, and WCAP wrestling coach Shon Lewis, a retired staff sergeant and former All-Army and WCAP wrestler, helped lead Team USA to its best Greco-Roman performance at the Pan American Games in 30 years.

On the wrestling mat, three Soldiers led by Lewis won medals. Capt. Jon Anderson struck gold and two-time Olympian Sgt. Spenser Mango secured bronze to help Team USA win the Greco-Roman team title for the first time since 1985. WCAP Sgt. Whitney Conder won another gold medal in women's freestyle wrestling. Sgt. Caylor Williams did not receive a medal but gained invaluable experience for the upcoming world championships.

"We came here to win medals and we were able to do that, so I'm just excited for the entire team," Lewis said. "As we head to Las Vegas for the World Championships, this is an upbeat. We still have a lot of work to do, but I'm encouraged with how we performed."

In men's Modern Pentathlon — a sport that includes fencing, swimming, equestrian show jumping, cross-country running and laser pistol shooting all in one day — Spc. Nathan Schrimsher earned a berth in the 2016 Olympic Games with a bronze-medal performance.

On the track, Spc. Aron Rono won a silver medal and Spc. Shadrack Kipchirchir finished fourth in the men's 10,000-meter run.

In shooting, WCAP Spc. Bryant Wallizer won a bronze medal in the 10-meter air rifle event. Sgt. Nickolaus Mowrer finished fifth in 50-meter free pistol and ninth in 10-meter air pistol.

## **3-Gun Championship**

The Army's action shooting team won the four-man team event for the second straight year and several individual first-place titles during the 2015 Rocky Mountain 3-Gun Championship at the National Rifle Association's Whittington Center near Raton, New Mexico, Aug. 13-16.

"This type of match plays to our strengths with more difficult shots, a more difficult environment," said Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Horner of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit, or USAMU, who competed during his sixth year at the championship. "It went exactly as it was supposed to go — we won the team match and individual matches."

First-place individual titles went to Horner in the Tactical Optics (Military) Division, Staff Sgt. Joel Turner in the Limited Sights (Military) Division, Sgt. Tyler Payne in the Open (Military) Division and Pfc. Katie Harris in the Lady Division.

Competitors shot three stages per day during the first three days of the four-day championship. Day four consisted of shoot-offs for individual divisions and the team event.

The U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit's mission is competing in and winning national and international shooting competitions and advancing small-arms lethality to demonstrate Army marksmanship capability and enhance marksmanship effectiveness in combat. USAMU is part of the U.S. Army Accessions Brigade and Army Marketing and Research Group.

## **Armed Forces Rugby**

The All-Army team won its third consecutive crown at the 2015 Armed Forces Rugby Sevens Championship Tournament at Infinity Park, Glendale, Colorado, home of the Glendale Raptors, one of the nation's premier rugby clubs, Aug. 14-15.

The Soldiers went 5-0 against teams from the Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard in the Armed Forces division of the world-class Serevi RugbyTown Sevens Tournament, which also drew teams from across the United States, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda and the Bahamas.

Five All-Army players and their coach, Col. Mark Drown of the Utah Army National Guard, were named to the All-Armed Forces Team. Players included U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program, or WCAP ruggers Sgt. Mattie Tago of Fort Carson, Colorado, Spc. Faleniko Spino of Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, and Ohio Army National Guard Spc. Zach Forro.

"That's the byproduct of a good group of guys," said Drown, who tentatively plans to take the All-Armed Forces Team to a tournament in Victoria, Canada, next spring. "I feel like the caboose because the train definitely is the players, and when they do well, I get to ride along."

The first-ever Armed Forces women's rugby camp was also held in August at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, culminating with the team playing in a USA City Sevens tournament in Philadelphia.

## **National Trophy Pistol Team**

The Army's Service Pistol Team won the National Trophy Pistol Team Match during the 2015 Civilian Marksmanship Program National Trophy Pistol Matches at Camp Perry, Ohio, July 12.

The winning U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit, or USAMU, team of Sgt. 1st Class Adam Sokolowski, Sgt 1st Class Patrick Franks, Staff Sgt. Lawrence Cleveland, Sgt. 1st Class Michael Gasser, and Sgt. Ryan Franks also won several individual matches, including the prestigious President's 100 Trophy.

"I'm pretty pleased with the overall results," said Sokolowski, a Yeagertown, Pennsylvania native and USAMU Service Pistol Team coach. "We are very proficient with the service pistol, and we have a lot of depth on that. I was confident going into [the match], we would dominate. We didn't expect to win everything because there are a lot of great shooters here, but I'm pleased with how it turned out."

The Army Pistol Team won the National Trophy Pistol Team Match with a total score of 1150-43X, defending the title of "Best in the Nation." The "X" in the score denotes hitting an X-ring inside the bull's-eye of a target. The X scores are used to break ties.

During the competition, Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Franks, of Henderson, Nevada, broke three national match records, bringing home the Military Police Corps Trophy, the General Mellon Trophy and the General Patton Trophy. His combined score of 588-28X set a third national record for the match.

Another Army Pistol Team member, Cleveland, won the National Trophy individual match, bringing home the General Custer Trophy with a score of 294-7X.

Although one of the less experienced Army Pistol Team members, Sgt. Ryan Franks won the prestigious President's Pistol Match, earning the top spot on the President's 100 competition. He also brought home the President's Trophy with a total score of 392-15X.

## **Interservice Rifle Team**

The U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit took first place at the 54th annual Interservice Rifle Team Championship. The Marine team came in second at the championships, held on Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, ending July 1.

During the competition, shooters from across the Department of Defense competed in a myriad of matches consisting of individual and team-scored shoots, varying from distances between 200 and 1,000 yards.

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“These are all the best military shooters,” said Col. Timothy Parker, commanding officer of the Weapons Training Battalion. “Here we have all of the best military shooters in the United States, and they go against each other to see who [are] the best military shooters.”

Soldiers, with Army Reserve Team Anderson, won the Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command Team Match with a score of 1,767.

## **Armed Forces Soccer**

All-Army beat Air Force 1-0 to capture the Armed Forces Soccer Championship after a week of competition at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, California, May 20.

A goal by Pvt. Alan Ibarra Lepe, of Fort Irwin, California, put Army on the scoreboard 28 minutes into the first half of the final match. Good defensive play for the rest of the game helped Army clinch the title.

Overall, Army finished the tournament 3-1 in match games. The Air Force and Navy both ended up with a 2-2 record. The Marine Corps finished 1-3 with its only win coming early against the Army.

Along with crowning a service champion, this week's soccer at Miramar also provided a venue for officials to evaluate individual performances and select members of the U.S. Armed Forces Men's Soccer Team, said Steve Dinote of Armed Forces Sports.

## **Armed Forces Cross Country**

The All-Army men swept the top six spots and the women claimed four of their top six positions as the black and gold dominated the 2015 Armed Forces Cross Country Championships at Flatirons Golf Course, Boulder, Colorado, Feb. 7.

The Army men's dominance marked the first time in U.S. Armed Forces Cross Country history that a team has swept the top six spots, said Ken Polk, Armed Forces Sports program manager.

Army Reserve Pfc. Stanley Kebenei, of Fayetteville, Arkansas, won the men's 12-kilometer race in 37 minutes, 28 seconds. Spc. Caroline Jepleting, of Landstuhl, Germany, won the women's eight-kilometer race in 30:01.

Lookingn Ahead to Rio

So far this year, four Soldiers have qualified — and more are expected to qualify — for the Olympics, which will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Aug. 5-21:

- Sgt. 1st Class Keith Sanderson, Army WCAP – (Pistol)
- Sgt. 1st Class Glenn Eller, Army Marksmanship Unit – Double Trap (Shotgun) Sgt. 1st Class Mike McPhail, Army Marksmanship Unit – Men's 50-meter prone rifle
- Spc. Nathaniel Schrimsher, Army WCAP, Modern Pentathlon More than 30 other Soldiers have a good shot at qualifying through Olympic trials this spring and summer.

*This roundup was compiled from original reports by David Vergun, Keith Oliver, Gary Sheftick, Tim Hipps, Brenda Rolin, Sgt. 1st Class Raymond J. Piper and Sgt. Terry Brady*