


# Wounded Warriors Compete In the Army Trials for Spots in the 2016 Warrior Games

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By Meghan Portillo - NCO Journal

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About 125 wounded, ill and injured active-duty Soldiers and Army veterans from across the country competed March 6-10 in the Army Trials at Fort Bliss, Texas. The athletes are seeking the opportunity to represent Team Army at the 2016 Department of Defense Warrior Games, which will be held June 14-22 at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York.

During the week of competition, wounded warriors competed in archery, cycling, track and field, shooting, sitting volleyball, swimming and wheelchair basketball. Coaches and leaders will now assess the results, and the chosen athletes will receive an official invitation to join Team Army. Approximately 250 athletes representing the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Special Operations Command will compete in the DoD Warrior Games this year.

## Recovery through sports

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The trials are part of the Army Warrior Care and Transition program, which aids in the recovery of wounded, ill and injured Soldiers and veterans as they transition back into the force or the civilian community.

“Our adaptive reconditioning program is a critical part of warriors’ transition,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Matthew T. Brady, command sergeant major for the Warrior Transition Command, in an interview with the NCO Journal last year. “It’s not just a sports program. It’s a program of activity in support of the surgeon general’s Performance Triad — sleep, proper nutrition and activity. For many of these Soldiers, this is kind of their ‘new norm’ — picking up activities they may have never tried before. It’s a new outlet. So if you look at the shooting, it takes concentration, the ability to block out distractions, a great amount of discipline — and these are all things that set you up for other tasks in life.”

In addition to aiding in their physical and mental recovery, these sports give Soldiers a new passion and something to look forward to doing when they leave the military, Brady said. Veterans Affairs and civilian organizations offer adaptive sports programs all over the nation, and sponsors often help defray the cost. Transition coordinators within every Warrior Transition Unit work to connect Soldiers with these organizations when they leave, Brady said, as should NCOs across the Army as they help injured and ill Soldiers prepare for life outside the military.

“We have them for maybe two years, but these Soldiers will be veterans for the rest of their lives,” Brady said. “We have got to set them up for success down the road.

“I hope NCOs realize I only have a certain number of these individuals in this Integrated Disability Evaluation System process — I only have a fraction of them. The majority of them are out in the force. They are out in the force and being led by NCOs, and as they go through the challenges of recovery, these same sports are available to them. What I need NCOs to do is to support this type of activity because that individual is going to leave our military, and we don’t want them becoming sedentary. We don’t want them leaving and feeling like they don’t have something to look forward to. I need NCOs’ support.”

Wounded Warriors Compete In the Army Trials

























