

[\[FOR MORE EVANS ARTICLES, CLICK HERE\]](#)



Three head east in search of gold

By Jeff Troth MEDDAC PAO

Three Soldiers from the Fort Carson Warrior Transition Battalion have headed east in search of gold during the 2015 Department of Defense Warrior Games.

The Warrior Games showcases the skills and celebrates the triumphs and personal courage of 270 wounded, ill and injured service members and veterans from all military branches and our partners in the British Armed Forces. The games are being held June 18 to 28 at Marines Corps Base Quantico, Vir.

"The Soldiers selected to compete for Team Army represent the best of the warrior spirit of the Army," said Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Cole, Fort Carson WTB. "They are demonstrating the resiliency and endurance needed to overcome their wounds, illnesses or injuries. This ruggedness embodies the will all Soldiers must have to fight and win the nation's wars."

This is the 6th year of the Warrior Games, but for the Fort Carson trio it is their first time being a part of it. All three are glad they made the Army team and are hoping to bring home gold medals.

"I want to give it all that I have," said Cpl. Mathew Mueller. "I don't want to leave anything inside; I want to leave it all on the track, or in the pool. And hopefully I will come back with a couple of medals for myself and help Army win."

Mueller, who is from Fort Morgan, Colo., was injured last year in a car accident, breaking his neck and bones in the right side of his face, leaving him with double vision in his right eye. For this reason he is competing in the visually impaired events in swimming, cycling and track and field. But, since he is not completely blind, Mueller must wear a blindfold when competing in these events. He is also a member of the Team Army's sitting volleyball team.

"Being blindfolded has helped me with my recovery," Mueller said. "Because it helps me realize that my situation could be worse. It also makes me realize that there are other people with similar injuries and that I still have a life after my injuries and life beyond this recovery."

For Sgt. Nicolas Titman, who sustained injuries to his lower back while overseas and stateside, sports has always been a part of his life. He started playing volleyball at a very young age and played throughout high school and ran track in middle school and high school. Competing in the Warrior Games allows him to continue with sports despite his injuries.

"Sports have always played a huge part in my life ever since I was little," Titman said, a native of Damascus, Vir. "It's been my go-to, just to relax and take my mind off of things, just to do something that betters me, physically and mentally."

Although he can no longer play "regular" volleyball, Titman will be competing in sitting volleyball, as well as swimming, track, cycling, and wheelchair basketball.

The games and competing in adaptive sports has allowed Sgt. Patrick Timmins to realize that he is not done.

"I have more in me than I ever imagined," Timmins said. "By competing for the Army in the Warrior Games, I am able to show my family, myself and every other service member that just because you aren't as healthy or as able bodied as you once were, it doesn't mean life is over."

"The confidence, the pride, the enjoyment these games build and offer to our Soldiers and our veterans is beyond measure," said Lt. Col. David Laydon, the Fort Carson WTB commander. "The Warrior Games are truly another means of positive healing for both."

But while the games are about competing and all have their sights on gold, the medals are just a small part of why the Soldiers have traveled to Virginia. They all agree that the best part of the games is the comradery, being part of a team again and meeting others who are facing similar challenges.

"I have been deployed and in a team aspect in the past," said Mueller. "But when you are with people who have gone through similar things like you, who have fought for their life, who have fought to stay motivated and compete – that is something special. And to be part of that is the coolest thing I have ever done."

Timmins said that sports like seated volleyball and wheelchair basketball have allowed him to meet new people and socialize with others he normally wouldn't have met. The Columbiana, Ala., native is also competing in track and field events.

"I know everyone's always preaching medals, Commander's Cup, and that's amazing. No one wants to come and compete and lose," Titman said. "But for me, ultimately, it's about the friends, and it's about the bonds. It's about getting out here and communicating with one another and talking about what you face in life and what your struggles are and helping each other overcome that."

"Being able to do adaptive sports has shown me that that I'm a lot more than a broken Soldier," said Timmins. "I'm still a warrior and a competitor."



Sgt. Nicholas Titman comes up for air during swimming training for the 2015 Department of Defense Warrior Games at Fort Belvoir, Va., June 4. (Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Sandy Barrientos/Released)