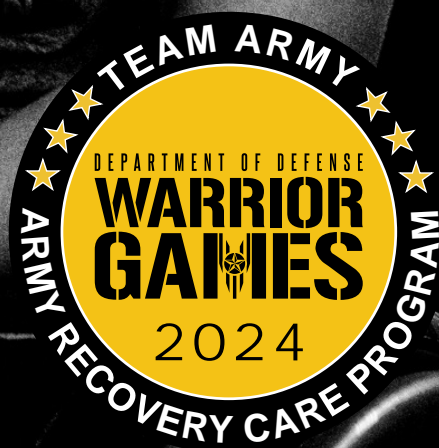
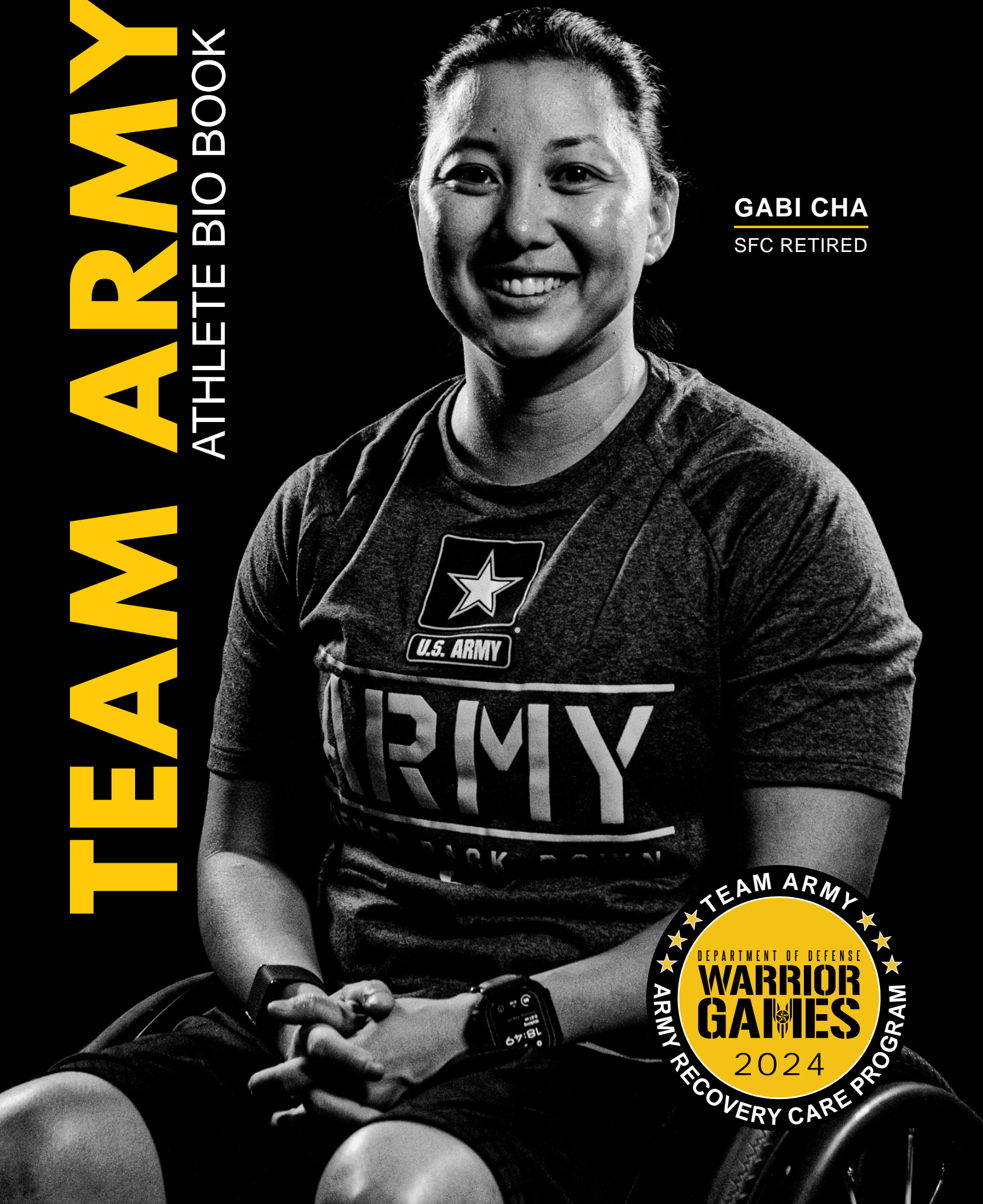


# TEAM ARMY

ATHLETE BIO BOOK

**GABI CHA**  
SFC RETIRED



<b>SCHEDULE OF EVENTS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
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Team Army athletes pose for a photo June 12, 2023, during the DoD Warrior Games Challenge, Naval Air Station North Island San Diego, California, June 2 – 12, 2023.  
(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Eric Vicenty)



## FRIDAY | JUNE 21

**0730 - 1400**

**POWERLIFTING EVENT**

ADVENT HEALTH ARENA - NW PAVILION

## SATURDAY | JUNE 22

**0800 - 1230**

**CYCLING ROAD RACE**

MVP PARKING LOT

**1130 - 1500**

**WHEELCHAIR RUGBY - POOL PLAY**

ATHLETIC CENTER

**1830 - 2030**

**KICK-OFF EVENT**

ADVENT HEALTH ARENA - NW PAVILION

## SUNDAY | JUNE 23

**0800 - 1700**

**PRECISION AIR EVENT - DAY 1**

OSCEOLA HERITAGE PARK

**1700 - 2115**

**WHEELCHAIR RUGBY - BRACKET PLAY**

ATHLETIC CENTER

## MONDAY | JUNE 24

**0815 - 1430**

**PRECISION AIR EVENT - DAY 2**

OSCEOLA HERITAGE PARK

**1800 - 2100**

**WHEELCHAIR RUGBY - FINALS**

STATE FARM FIELD HOUSE

## TUESDAY | JUNE 25

**0800 - 1130**

**INDOOR ROWING EVENT**

ADVENT HEALTH ARENA - NW PAVILION

**1500 - 1915**

**WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL - POOL PLAY**

ATHLETIC CENTER

## WEDNESDAY | JUNE 26

**0800 - 1900**

**ARCHERY EVENT**

STATE FARM FIELD HOUSE

**1800 - 2215**

**WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL - BRACKET PLAY**

ATHLETIC CENTER

## THURSDAY | JUNE 27

**0730 - 1430**

**TRACK EVENT**

TRACK & FIELD COMPLEX

**1800 - 2100**

**WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL - FINALS**

STATE FARM FIELD HOUSE

## FRIDAY | JUNE 28

**0730 - 1330**

**FIELD EVENT**

TRACK & FIELD COMPLEX

**1600 - 1930**

**SITTING VOLLEYBALL - POOL PLAY**

ATHLETIC CENTER

## SATURDAY | JUNE 29

**0800 - 1500**

**SWIMMING EVENT**

ORLANDO HEALTH NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER

**1800 - 2130**

**SITTING VOLLEYBALL - BRACKET PLAY**

ATHLETIC CENTER

## SUNDAY | JUNE 30

**1200 - 1430**

**SITTING VOLLEYBALL - FINALS**

STATE FARM FIELD HOUSE

**1700 - 1930**




**SEND OFF EVENT**

ADVENT HEALTH ARENA - NW PAVILION





## MAP LEGEND

### Athletic Center

-  Sitting Volleyball
-  Wheelchair Basketball
-  Wheelchair Rugby



### AdventHealth Arena

-  Powerlifting
-  Indoor Rowing

### State Farm Field House

-  Archery


### Track & Field Complex

-  Track
-  Field

### MVP Parking Lot

-  Cycling

### Orlando Health National Training Center (off-site)

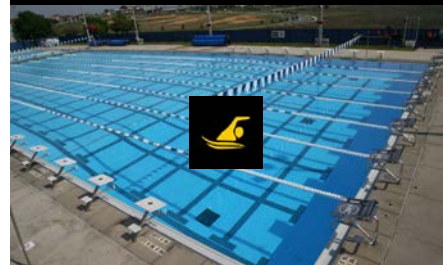
-  Swimming

### Osceola Heritage Park (off-site)

-  Precision Air Sports

### ORLANDO HEALTH NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER

1935 Don Wickham Dr, Clermont, FL 34711



### OSCEOLA HERITAGE PARK

1875 Silver Spur Ln, Kissimmee, FL 34744



## LUIS AVILA

RANK  
CPT

STATUS  
Active Duty

HOMETOWN  
Metairie, LA

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Walter Reed National Military  
Medical Center (WRNMMC)

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Amputee  
Partial Paralysis  
Traumatic Brain Injury

EVENTS  
Archery  
Cycling  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Precision Air Sports



CPT Luis Avila enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2000, later earning his commission in 2004. He pursued a distinguished career in the military police, and completed multiple combat tours including Operation Noble Eagle, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), where he faced severe injuries from an IED explosion. Despite sustaining significant physical and cognitive trauma, CPT Avila defied the odds, emerging from a coma and gradually regaining speech and motor functions through resilient determination and multidisciplinary rehabilitation, notably incorporating music therapy.

Discovering a passion for singing and harmonica playing during recovery, he utilized these talents to inspire others and aid in his own healing journey. Remaining an active advocate for fellow service members, CPT Avila excelled in adaptive sports, achieving first place in the Amputee Warrior Men category of the Army Ten-Miler, and earning a spot-on Team Army for the 2022 Warrior Games and 2023 Warrior Games Challenge where he secured multiple medals.

His unwavering dedication to service has garnered prestigious honors such as the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and The Order of the Marechaussee in Silver. CPT Avila resides with his family in Bethesda, Maryland, and is currently undergoing rehabilitation at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC).

## ABEL BAEZ

RANK  
SSG

STATUS  
National Guard

HOMETOWN  
Palm Bay, FL

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Fort Stewart, GA

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Anterior Cruciate Ligament  
Meniscus Injury

EVENTS  
Archery  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Precision Air Sports  
Sitting Volleyball  
Swimming  
Wheelchair Basketball  
Wheelchair Rugby



SSG Abel Baez, originally from Palm Bay, Florida, serves with distinction in the National Guard, accumulating an impressive 18-year tenure in the military. As a committed single father to his 12-year-old daughter, he exemplifies resilience both in and out of uniform. Following a demanding knee surgery, SSG Baez found himself at Fort Stewart SRU, where he immersed himself in adaptive sports. Embracing each opportunity, he engaged in various athletic pursuits tailored for individuals facing similar challenges.

Upon discovering the formation of a U.S. Army team for the Department of Defense Warrior Games, SSG Baez seized the opportunity to showcase his determination and skill. His participation in the Warrior Games signifies not only a personal journey towards self-assurance but also serves as hope for others navigating similar circumstances. Through this challenge, he aims to inspire fellow service members to surpass limitations and realize their full potential.

## GERALD BLAKLEY

RANK  
SPC

STATUS  
Veteran

HOMETOWN  
Cincinnati, OH

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Coeur d'Alene, ID

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Fibromuscular Dysplasia  
Herniated Disc

EVENTS  
Field  
Precision Air Sports  
Track  
Wheelchair Basketball  
Wheelchair Rugby



SPC Gerald Blakley's journey began when a herniated disc in his lower back led him to the Joint Base Lewis McChord Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU). Although his time at the SRU was lengthy, Blakley found it ultimately fulfilling. Life took a drastic turn post-injury, confining him to a wheelchair for a year and ultimately leading to medical retirement. Despite these challenges, Blakley cherishes his Army journey and the profound impact it had on his family.

For Blakley, the Department of Defense Warrior Games signify more than just competition; they represent resilience and the belief that, despite a disability, one can still be active and competitive. He sees competing on Team Army as an affirmation of his worth and a testament to the strength within him. Blakley is honored to represent his fellow soldiers, demonstrating that setbacks do not define them.

He draws inspiration from a quote that resonates deeply with him: "Strength does not come from the body... It comes from the will." This mantra propels him forward, reminding him that true strength lies in determination and the unwavering will to overcome life's obstacles.

## STEVE BORTLE

RANK  
CPT

STATUS  
Veteran

HOMETOWN  
Ewa Beach, HI

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Ewa Beach, HI

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Shoulder Injury  
Hip Replacement  
Ulcerative Colitis

EVENTS  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Powerlifting  
Sitting Volleyball  
Swimming  
Track



CPT Steve Bortle enlisted in the Marine Corps after high school, serving six years before transitioning to the Army Reserves in 2002. Deployed to Iraq in 2015, he later retired from the Army National Guard. During a deployment to Afghanistan, he suffered shoulder injuries and developed an autoimmune disease, leading to his placement in the Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. At the WTU, CPT Bortle discovered adaptive sports during his recovery journey. He competed at the Warrior Games in 2015 before medical discharge due to his autoimmune condition.

In 2018, he excelled at the Army Trials, earning spots on both the Army's Warrior Games and the Invictus Games. Unfortunately, during the Invictus Games long jump event, Steve sustained a hip injury requiring replacement. Undeterred, he pursued rehabilitation and embraced adaptive sports, culminating in a remarkable achievement: completing his first full Ironman Triathlon merely five months post-hip replacement.

Since retiring, Steve has dedicated himself to education, serving as a high school teacher, coach, and inspirational figure. Currently, he focuses on gym workouts, weight gain, and enhancing his bench press, with aspirations of entering bodybuilding competitions in the future, exemplifying his perseverance in the face of adversity.

## DARNELL BOYNTON

RANK  
SPC

STATUS  
National Guard

HOMETOWN  
Brunswick, GA

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Augusta, GA  
Fort Stewart, GA

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Anterior Cruciate Ligament  
Meniscus Injury

EVENTS  
Field  
Swimming  
Track



SPC Darnell Boynton is a grounded individual with a tranquil spirit, considering himself a homebody at heart. He aspires to achieve the highest office in the land, aiming to become Commander in Chief through his intelligence, optimism, and determination.

At the Fort Stewart Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU), SPC Boynton successfully recovered from injuries to his ACL and meniscus, demonstrating resilience and determination in his rehabilitation journey. Additionally, he takes great pride in his role as a devoted father to his son, Darnell Jr.

Those who have had the pleasure of interacting with SPC Boynton can attest to his ability to brighten any room with his infectious smile and positive energy.

## JOHN MICHAEL BRITTON

RANK  
SSG

STATUS  
Active Duty

HOMETOWN  
Charleston, SC

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Joint Base San Antonio, TX

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Above the Knee Amputee  
Fractured Right Arm

EVENTS  
Archery  
Field  
Swimming  
Track



SSG John Michael Britton enlisted in the U.S. Army in July 2010, embodying steadfast dedication and adaptability throughout his service. Initially serving five years on active duty as a Military Police (31B), he transitioned to the Army Reserves, re-classing to a Combat Engineer (12B), showcasing his versatility and eagerness for new challenges. After a brief hiatus, he reenlisted in October 2020, returning to active duty as an Infantryman (11B), fueled by a profound sense of duty.

Stationed at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Staff Sergeant Britton served as an Airborne Infantry Fire Team Squad Leader until an unfortunate accident altered his path, resulting in a right above knee amputation and a fractured right arm. Despite this adversity, his resilient spirit remains unbroken.

Currently undergoing care and recovery at Joint Base San Antonio's Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU), Staff Sergeant Britton's determination shines as he perseveres through rehabilitation at the Center for the Intrepid. His motivation lies in reclaiming the activities he once enjoyed, aspiring to run, bike, hike, and embrace the adventurous pursuits that define him.

## GENE CALANTOC

RANK  
SSG

STATUS  
Veteran

HOMETOWN  
Cibolo, TX

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
San Antonio, TX

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Above the Knee Amputee

EVENTS  
Archery  
Cycling  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Powerlifting  
Wheelchair Basketball  
Wheelchair Rugby



Retired SSG Gene Calantoc, along with his wife Miho and their three children (Mica, Leina, and Kai), as well as their Frenchie puppy Blu, form a close-knit family. Originally from the Philippines, Gene moved to the United States at age 12 in 1997.

Joining the U.S. Army as an engineer in 2011, he served with the 101st Screaming Eagles Bastogne Engineers and deployed with them to Afghanistan.

In March 2020, a motorcycle accident cost him his left leg. After over a decade of service, he medically retired in 2021. Despite the accident, Gene discovered a passion for staying active, participating in various sports without his leg. He competed in the regional games in Texas and aimed for the Warrior Games in 2021, though they were canceled.

Undeterred, he excelled at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in 2023 and secured 1st place overall in the hand-cycle category at the 39th Army 10-Miler in Washington. Gene aspires to compete in the Invictus Games and qualify for the Paralympics.

## VICTORIA CAMIRE

RANK  
MAJ

STATUS  
Veteran

HOMETOWN  
Hopewell, VA

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Lakewood, WA

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder  
Anxiety  
Depression

EVENTS  
Cycling  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Precision Air Sports  
Track



MAJ Victoria Camire, a 14-year Army JAG Veteran, medically retired in 2023 due to PTSD, anxiety, depression, and various physical injuries. A seasoned competitor, she participated in the 2022 Warrior Games and 2023 Warrior Games Challenge, representing Team Army, and competed in the Invictus Games on Team US. Cycling is her passion.

Victoria attributes much of her recovery and transition from active duty to Veteran status to the adaptive sports community and ARCP, which she regards as her second family. She emphasizes their pivotal role in helping her find purpose and identity post-military service.

Reflecting on her journey, she shares, “When I first learned about Warrior Games, I thought there was no way I would be selected. Choosing to give myself a chance and try out is one of the best decisions I have made in my life. Don’t underestimate yourself.”

Outside of her military career, Victoria is a dedicated mother to two children and serves as a public defender, passionately advocating for Veterans, and the indigent community. Her story is a testament to resilience, determination, and the transformative power of adaptive sports.

## BERENICE CARMONA

RANK  
SPC

STATUS  
National Guard

HOMETOWN  
Hinesville, GA

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Fort Stewart, GA

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Anterior Cruciate Ligament

EVENTS  
Archery  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Powerlifting



SPC Berenice Carmona embarked on her recovery journey after sustaining a left knee injury while deployed, leading her to the Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU). Initially, she anticipated a quick return to normalcy post-surgery, unaware of the profound changes her injury would entail. Despite facing early retirement and permanent physical limitations, Berenice's enduring passion for sports left her feeling inadequate without the ability to train, play, or compete.

However, participation in the Commander's Cup as a soldier in recovery revealed a path forward. Berenice discovered she could adapt her training, play, and competitive spirit to accommodate her limitations. Competing for Team Army in this year's Warrior Games fills her with immense pride, affirming her future career and lifestyle aspirations centered around physical activity within her constraints.

This opportunity wouldn't have been possible without the dedicated coaching, mentorship, and unwavering support of the ARCP team. Their guidance has fueled Berenice's determination, motivation, and hope for the future, inspiring her to pursue her passion for athletics despite adversity.

## HYOSHIN CHA

RANK  
SFC

STATUS  
Veteran

HOMETOWN  
Houston, TX

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Houston, TX

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Right Side Partial Paralysis

EVENTS  
Cycling  
Field  
Swimming  
Track



Retired Army SFC Hyoshin “Gabi” Cha dedicated seventeen years of service as a combat medic in the Army. In 2006, an IED explosion left her with injuries that required extensive recovery, marked by numerous surgeries. Despite the challenges, Gabi’s resilience propelled her to compete for Team Army at the Warrior Games in 2018 and Invictus in 2022.

This year, Gabi will showcase her strength and determination across various disciplines including powerlifting, swimming, hand cycling, and field events. For her, adaptive sports represent a profound second chance at life, offering avenues for physical and mental rejuvenation.

Guided by the mantra “One weight at a time,” Gabi embraces a philosophy of perseverance and incremental progress. Through her journey in adaptive sports, she exemplifies the resilience and fortitude that define the spirit of wounded warriors.

Gabi’s participation not only reflects her personal triumph over adversity but also serves as an inspiration to fellow service members and the wider community. Her story highlights how adaptive sports empower individuals to surmount obstacles and confront life’s trials with resolute determination.

## PATRICK DAYTON

RANK  
CPL

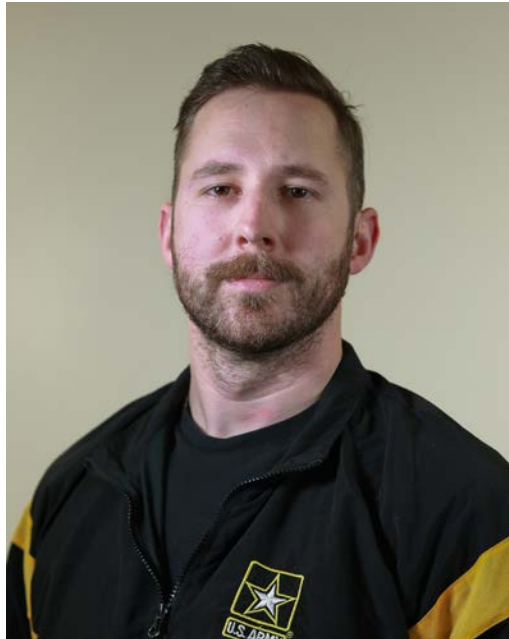
STATUS  
Veteran

HOMETOWN  
Olympia, WA

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Below the Knee Amputee

EVENTS  
Indoor Rowing  
Powerlifting  
Swimming  
Track



CPL Patrick Dayton, a proud Army veteran with nearly a decade of service, faced a life-altering event during a routine drill weekend in June 2022. While in route to JBLM for duty, he was struck by a motor vehicle, resulting in a devastating injury: the amputation of his right leg below the knee.

Following the accident, Dayton underwent intensive rehabilitation at the Center for the Intrepid in Fort Sam, Texas, and spent a year as a resident at the JBLM Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU). Reflecting on his journey, Dayton acknowledges the profound impact of becoming an amputee, yet finds solace and purpose in adaptive sports, particularly through the Warrior Games.

For Dayton, the Warrior Games represent a vital link to the camaraderie and challenges of military life that he deeply misses. He credits much of his resilience and success to his devoted wife, Nicole, who has been his unwavering source of support and encouragement.

As he prepares to compete, Dayton embodies the spirit of determination and perseverance, grateful for the opportunity to reclaim a sense of purpose through adaptive sports.

## NATHAN DEGEN

RANK  
CPT

STATUS  
Active Duty

HOMETOWN  
Arlington, TX

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Fort Belvoir, VA

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Knee Injury  
Shoulder Injury  
Ear, Nose, and Throat

EVENTS  
Archery  
Field  
Precision Air Sports  
Sitting Volleyball  
Wheelchair Rugby



CPT Nathan Degen's journey to the Fort Belvoir Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU) was marked by a series of debilitating injuries, including torn ACL/meniscus, a torn labrum in the shoulder, and persistent ENT issues. Despite halting his ability to fly helicopters and support fellow Soldiers, with support from his family and dedicated teams at Fort Belvoir, CPT Degen found renewal.

Overcoming physical, mental, and emotional hurdles, he rediscovered the spirit he had been missing. Competing in the Warrior Games symbolizes a personal triumph. CPT Degen views the opportunity to compete alongside fellow Army and DoD team members, who have surmounted even greater obstacles, as a profound honor.

Embracing mantras such as "Love God, Love Others. Serve God, Serve Others, Learn, Earn, Return," and "Shooters Shoot," he embodies a philosophy of seizing opportunities and making them count. As he prepares for the games, CPT Degen extends heartfelt gratitude to his wife, who will be managing a toddler and a one-week-old child during this period. Her unwavering support and sacrifice serve as a testament to the strength of their partnership.

## JEREMY DITLEVSON

RANK  
MAJ

STATUS  
Active Duty

HOMETOWN  
Fort Sill, CA

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Joint Base San Antonio, TX

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Stroke  
Hemiplegia  
Aphasia

EVENTS  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Precision Air Sports  
Swimming



MAJ Ditlevson joined the Army in 2004 at the age of 30. Rising through the ranks, he served as a Sergeant before attending Officer Candidate School in 2010, transitioning into a role as a Field Artillery Officer. Throughout his distinguished career, MAJ Ditlevson held several key positions including Fire Support Officer, Fire Direction Officer, Battery Commander, Logistics Officer, and Strike Director.

After his fifth deployment, MAJ Ditlevson faced a significant challenge; he suffered a massive stroke that led to hemiplegia on his right side, aphasia, and partial vision loss. His recovery journey began at the Audie L. Murphy Poly-Trauma unit in San Antonio, followed by recovery care at the Joint Base San Antonio Support Recovery Unit (SRU). Starting with swimming at the Brain Injury Clinic in June 2023, MAJ Ditlevson's relentless spirit quickly became apparent. He soon took to indoor rowing, where he continued to excel, demonstrating a fierce resolve to overcome every obstacle.

Despite being told he might never walk again, MAJ Ditlevson has consistently defied expectations, surpassing the predictions of doctors and care teams. His journey is a testament to his unwavering determination to confront each battle head-on, embodying the spirit of a true warrior.

## HENRY ESCOBEDO

RANK  
SFC

STATUS  
Veteran

HOMETOWN  
Pearland, TX

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Pearland, TX

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Leber's Optic Neuropathy

EVENTS  
Cycling  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Swimming  
Track



SFC Henry Escobedo is a visually impaired U.S Army Veteran from Houston, Texas, who served honorably for 12 years. When he returned from his first deployment in 2004, he began to experience headaches and dry eyes. The condition worsened during his 2010 deployment. By the end of 2011, Henry's vision had deteriorated almost completely, and he is now legally blind with a peripheral degree. Doctors eventually diagnosed him with Leber's Optic Neuropathy.

After becoming visually impaired it was beyond difficult for him to comprehend and extremely hard and depressing because he lost his independence, career, and lifestyle. He found himself lost and hurt physically, emotionally, and mentally. Henry found a beam of light in adaptive sports.

For SFC Escobedo, competing in Warrior Games with Team Army would be an amazing achievement and a mission complete. Once he learned about Warrior Games, he invested the past two years in participating in "such a great event." He wants to honor and thank God, his family, and friends.

## BRENT GARLIC

RANK  
SPC

STATUS  
Veteran

HOMETOWN  
Vineland, NJ

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Atlanta, GA

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
T-12 Paraplegic

EVENTS  
Cycling  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Powerlifting  
Swimming  
Wheelchair Basketball  
Wheelchair Rugby



Retired SPC Brent Garlic served in the U.S. Army for two years before a life-altering incident that he describes with the surreal imagery of an ‘alien abduction’. His memories of the day before the incident are faint, and he has no recollection of the accident itself. Awakening from a coma days later, Brent found himself in a drastically changed world—his new reality marked by a significant loss of mobility.

Four years post-injury, Brent discovered the transformative power of adaptive sports. Initially shrouded in doubt and aimlessness, he found renewed purpose and connection. The adaptive sports community introduced him to thousands of peers navigating similar challenges, fostering a sense of solidarity, and resilience.

The Warrior Games marked a pinnacle in Brent’s journey. Orchestrated by the Department of Defense, the Games synergized adaptive sports with the camaraderie of service, enabling veterans and active military personnel from across the nation to connect and grow together. If not for the encouragement of retired Staff Sergeant Robert Jones from Atlanta, Georgia, Brent might never have encountered these pivotal military programs.

Brent lives by the mantra: “Nothing ever gets done by being weak.”

## CORINE HAMILTON

RANK  
SPC

STATUS  
Veteran

HOMETOWN  
Tampa, FL

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Tampa, FL

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Spinal Cord Injury

EVENTS  
Cycling  
Field  
Powerlifting  
Track



On March 27, 2021, SPC Corine Hamilton faced a life-altering event when she sustained a spinal cord injury that left her paralyzed. This traumatic incident plunged her into a deep depression, as she grappled with the sudden changes to her life. However, her outlook began to shift after arriving at Walter Reed's Support Recovery Unit (SRU), where she was introduced to adaptive sports.

Adaptive sports not only rejuvenated Corine's physical and mental health but also provided her with a renewed sense of purpose. Being surrounded by fellow soldiers who shared similar experiences, she felt embraced by a community that understood her struggles intimately. This supportive network played a crucial role in her recovery and integration back into an active life.

Corine participated in the 2022 Warrior Games and the 2023 Invictus Games, finding each event to be a profoundly gratifying experience that contributed to her rehabilitation and personal growth. She extends her deepest gratitude to God for daily strength, and to her mother, family, and close friends, whose unwavering support has been a cornerstone of her journey.

## BIANCA HAYDEN

RANK  
SGT

STATUS  
National Guard

HOMETOWN  
Eugene, OR

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Bicep Injury  
Shoulder Injury

EVENTS  
Archery  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Precision Air Sports  
Swimming



SGT Bianca Hayden, aged 23, has dedicated nearly six years to the National Guard, with deployments spanning Afghanistan, Germany, and Poland. Currently stationed at the Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU), SGT Hayden is undergoing recovery from two shoulder and bicep surgeries on her left arm.

Throughout her rehabilitation, SGT Hayden remained committed to her physical regimen, adapting her workouts to accommodate her limitations. The SRU facilitated her transition to one-armed rowing, a newfound passion that has become integral to her routine. Motivated by her experience, SGT Hayden delved into understanding her injury and recovery process, obtaining certification as a personal trainer, and specializing in adaptive workouts. Competing in the Warrior Games is deeply meaningful to her, symbolizing resilience in the face of adversity.

Embracing the challenges ahead, she finds inspiration in the pursuit of adaptive sports and the camaraderie of fellow athletes. Though uncertainties loom regarding her post-SRU path, SGT Hayden remains steadfast in her belief that obstacles are opportunities for growth. She is reminded that triumph often follows the most daunting setbacks.

## MATTHEW HOVEY

RANK  
1LT

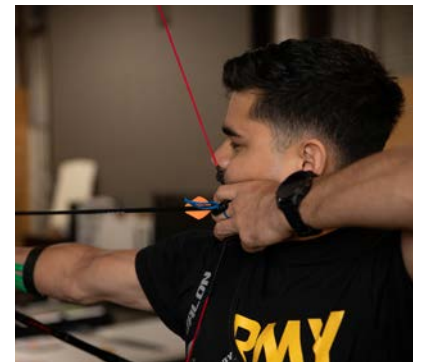
STATUS  
National Guard

HOMETOWN  
Fredericksburg, VA

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Fort Belvoir, VA

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Cervical Disc Herniation

EVENTS  
Archery  
Cycling  
Precision Air Sports  
Swimming



1LT Matthew Hovey hails from Fredericksburg, VA. His military service, now spanning six years including a deployment under Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq and Syria, was inspired by the 2017 North Korean missile crisis. This led him through Officer Candidate School and Field Artillery training. 1LT Hovey has tackled varied challenges, from responding to the January 6th Capitol riots to recovering at the Soldier Recovery Unit, where he focuses on healing and reintegration.

Motivated by past participants and Adaptive Reconditioning Contractors, 1LT Hovey is eager to challenge his limits at the DOD Warrior Games, thriving in the camaraderie among competitors. His athletic pursuits include wrestling, track, football, soccer, and adaptive training like trail running, recumbent biking, and swimming.

Inspired by figures like Tim Kennedy, Joe Rogan, Dr. Andrew Huberman, and David Goggins, Hovey draws strength from their resilience. Representing Fort Belvoir and Team Army, he values the support from his recovery unit, coaches, and teammates. The Warrior Games are more than a competition; they embody resilience, strength, and service spirit. Hovey is committed to excelling and honoring the Army.

## BROOKE JADER

RANK  
SPC

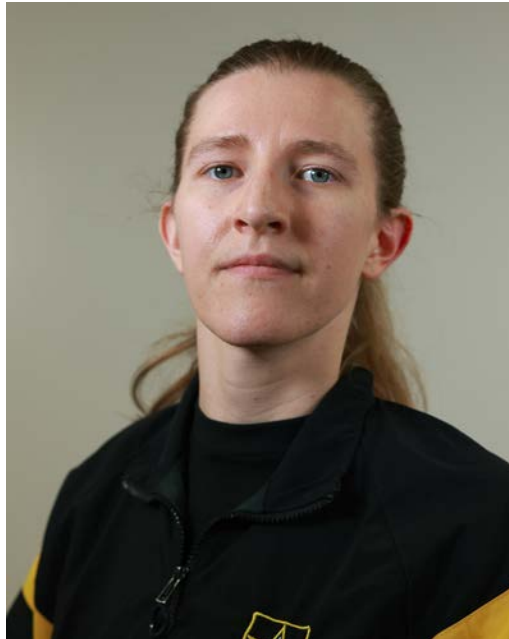
STATUS  
National Guard

HOMETOWN  
Manhattan, KS

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Fort Riley, KS

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Thoracic Outlet Syndrome

EVENTS  
Cycling  
Field  
Precision Air Sports  
Swimming  
Track  
Wheelchair Basketball



SPC Brooke Jader was referred to the SRU due to concerns about a possible thymoma and jugular swelling. After multiple appointments, she was diagnosed with a benign thymoma and bilateral vascular thoracic outlet syndrome (TOS). Brooke underwent surgery to remove her right first rib, easing vein pressure. Despite the challenges of a med board, she believes the surgical outcomes and ongoing care are positive.

Her time at the SRU has been extensive yet rewarding. The staff and cadre have provided tremendous support, focusing on her health and well-being. SPC Jader has actively participated in ARP activities, which have allowed her to forge new friendships, explore different sports, and enrich her life with meaningful experiences. Among these, wheelchair rugby has become her favorite.

Eager to compete in the 2024 Warrior Games, SPC Jader aims to demonstrate her capabilities and inspire others facing health setbacks. This ambition was sparked by two friends who participated in the 2023 Warrior Games Challenge, motivating her to pursue a spot on the team. SPC Jader extends her gratitude to everyone at the Fort Riley SRU, her friends and family, and especially her husband, Jay, for their unwavering support.

## JUSTIN PATRICK LANE

RANK  
SPC

STATUS  
Veteran

HOMETOWN  
Greenbay, WI

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
San Antonio, TX

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Double Amputee

EVENTS  
Archery  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Powerlifting  
Sitting Volleyball  
Track  
Wheelchair Basketball



SPC Justin “JP” Lane enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2008 at the age of 20. Serving as a combat engineer, he deployed to Afghanistan with the 428th Engineer Company in October 2010, tasked with detecting and neutralizing IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices).

On July 2nd, 2011, during a combat mission, his RG31 truck was hit by a 200lb IED blast, leaving him in a coma for six weeks and inflicting a total of 26 injuries, including the loss of both legs—a profound turning point in his life. Hailing from Green Bay, Wisconsin, JP’s dedication to serving and protecting the American people remains unwavering, even in the face of adversity.

His journey has led him to champion post-traumatic growth, inspiring civilians, veterans, and active-duty troops nationwide with his message of resilience: “Never Give Up, Never Surrender.” Recognized as both a speaker and talented singer, JP has graced prestigious stages, including performances at the inaugurations of Presidents Obama and Trump, as well as alongside re-nowned artists like Neal McCoy, Lee Greenwood, and Gavin DeGraw.

## SHAWN LEE

RANK  
SGT

STATUS  
Veteran

HOMETOWN  
Eugene, OR  
Southern California

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Fort Belvoir, VA

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Pelvic Injury  
Traumatic Brain Injury

EVENTS  
Cycling  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Powerlifting  
Swimming  
Wheelchair Rugby



SGT Shawn Lee, a native of Southern California and Eugene, Oregon, enlisted in the Army at age 20 and later moved to Pennsylvania. During his service, he completed four deployments to Kuwait, Jordan, Iraq, and Poland. Shawn is passionate about his military career and couldn't imagine fulfilling any other role in the Army.

An avid traveler and book enthusiast, Shawn enjoys exploring the world and delving into audiobooks and texts on finance, economics, and business management. He is a foodie with a love for Thai, Russian, and Middle Eastern cuisine, although Mexican and Brazilian dishes hold a special place in his heart. His top three travel destinations are Cinque Terre, Italy; Santorini, Greece; and Copenhagen, Denmark.

Currently, Shawn works as a Mid Atlantic Mobile Transition Specialist for the USO, where he supports transitioning service members and their spouses by providing essential resources. He is also in the final stages of launching his transportation business, CONVOY, aimed at simplifying transportation for veterans, their spouses, and military families globally. Shawn is eager to launch his app in the next six months, anticipating a significant impact on the military community.

## JUSTIN MATHERS

RANK  
SGT

STATUS  
Veteran

HOMETOWN  
Dallas, TX

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Fort Liberty, NC

### INJURY OR ILLNESS

Drop Foot  
Hip Injury  
L4-L5 Fusion

### EVENTS

Archery  
Cycling  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Powerlifting  
Precision Air Sports  
Swimming  
Track  
Wheelchair Basketball



SGT Justin Mathers is a medically retired U.S. Army veteran who experienced a life-changing motorcycle accident in 2017. Following the accident, Justin spent two years at the SRU at Fort Bragg, adapting to life with new disabilities. Through the adaptive reconditioning program, he discovered a passion for cycling and archery.

Justin's dedication to these sports culminated in his participation in the 2022 Warrior Games, where he earned seven medals. In 2023, he escalated his achievements by winning three national titles in USA Paracycling. The support and guidance from the program coordinators and physical therapists at the SRU were instrumental in his recovery and success.

Grateful for the opportunities provided by the Warrior Games, Justin looks forward to competing with Team Army and continuing to excel in his athletic pursuits.

## JASMIN MCKENZIE

RANK  
MSG

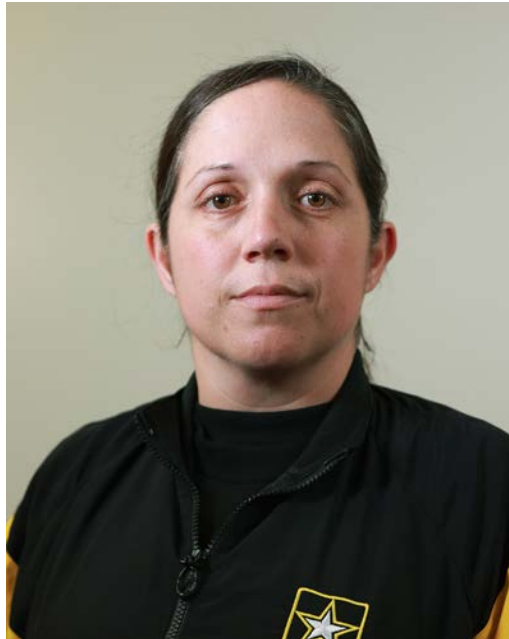
STATUS  
Active Duty

HOMETOWN  
Tucson, AZ

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Fort Belvoir, VA

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Sexual Assault  
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder  
Traumatic Brain Injury

EVENTS  
Cycling  
Field  
Precision Air Sports  
Swimming  
Track



MSG Jasmin McKenzie has spent the past year and a half at the Schofield Barracks and Fort Belvoir Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU), recovering from a traumatic incident. A seasoned U.S. Army Culinarian with 19 years of service, Jasmin's life changed drastically following a sexual assault, resulting in a TBI, severe PTSD, anxiety, and multiple surgeries for wrist injuries.

The SRU was instrumental in helping Jasmin regain her confidence and reintegrate into her previous self, despite becoming very introverted and fearful initially. Her engagement in adaptive sports and her goal to join Team Army have been crucial in managing her trauma.

MSG McKenzie recognizes that these experiences will always be a part of her life but refuses to let them dominate her. The support and encouragement from the SRU's leadership have been pivotal in her healing journey. Sharing her story has not only facilitated her recovery but also reignited her passion for her Army career. She has recently been cleared to return to active duty.

MSG McKenzie's mantra, "I am in charge of my future. Nothing will stop me," reflects her unwavering resilience and determination to overcome challenges and move forward.

## ALEXIS PANTOJA

RANK  
SPC

STATUS  
Active Duty

HOMETOWN  
Chicago, IL

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Fort Bliss, TX

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Traumatic Brain Injury

EVENTS  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Swimming  
Track



Following a severe traumatic brain injury, SPC Alexis Pantoja was admitted to the Fort Bliss Soldier Recovery Unit. Here, he embarked on a challenging journey to relearn walking, aided by intensive therapy, and recovery programs. His progress has been remarkable, now even running as part of his rehabilitation.

SPC Pantoja credits the SRU with playing a crucial role in his recovery, noting that without their intervention, he might not have realized the extent of care he required. He expresses a keen desire to participate in the Warrior Games, eager to showcase the effectiveness of the healthcare professionals who have significantly aided his recovery and to demonstrate his progress to others.

## CHRISTOPHER PARKS

RANK  
1LT

STATUS  
Veteran

HOMETOWN  
Lakeside, CA

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Weatherford, TX

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Above the Knee Amputation  
Spinal Cord Injury  
Traumatic Brain Injury

EVENTS  
Cycling  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Sitting Volleyball  
Swimming  
Track  
Wheelchair Basketball



1LT Christopher W. Parks has devoted 25 years to the U.S. Army as both a combat medic and a physician assistant. His career took a dramatic turn a decade ago when he lost his leg to a flesh-eating bacteria, faced septic shock twice, and endured a six-week medically induced coma. Despite these challenges, he emerged with a resolute spirit, embodying resilience, and proving that strength has no limits.

Today, alongside his wife, he co-founded The Texas Outlaws, a non-profit wheelchair basketball team that enriches their community by providing opportunities for individuals with similar challenges. Beyond his military accolades, 1LT Parks cherishes his role as a devout Christian, a loving husband, and a proud father of four adult children, as well as a grandfather to three granddaughters.

His life exemplifies the Army values of dedication and leadership, showing a commitment to service that transcends the battlefield.

## JACK PEKO

RANK  
SSG

STATUS  
Active Duty

HOMETOWN  
American Samoa

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Fort Riley, KS

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Cerebrovascular Accident  
Brain Tumor

EVENTS  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Precision Air Sports



SSG Jack Peko, a native of American Samoa, enlisted in the Army immediately after high school. Now 29 years old and serving as a 19K M1 Armor Crewman, SSG Peko has completed five deployments throughout his career. He and his wife Gloriah are proud parents to four children: Jayden, Liliana, Emeline, and Puamau.

SSG Peko's life took an unexpected turn when he suffered a stroke due to a brain tumor, which significantly impacted his mobility and speech, and left him with weakness on his left side. He joined the Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU), where he received comprehensive support, including physical, occupational, and speech therapy. SSG Peko is deeply grateful for the SRU's ongoing assistance, which has been crucial in his recovery.

He is eager to compete in the Warrior Games with Team Army, hoping to inspire others with his resilience and determination. SSG Peko lives by the philosophy that "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step," as quoted by Lao Tzu, reflecting his commitment to overcoming challenges one step at a time.

## JEFFREY PETERS

RANK  
SFC

STATUS  
Active Duty

HOMETOWN  
Fort Riley, KS

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Fort Riley, KS

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Ischemic Stroke

EVENTS  
Cycling  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Swimming  
Track



“Sometimes, when we’re in a dark place and we think we’ve been buried, we’ve actually been planted,” - C. Caine. This quote resonates deeply with SFC Jeffrey Peters, who, in August 2021, ten days after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, suffered a major ischemic stroke impacting multiple areas of his brain. The stroke significantly affected his mobility and self-care abilities, compelling his wife to pause her career to become his full-time caregiver.

At the time, SFC Peters motivation to recover was fueled by his three young sons, aged eight, five, and two. Their presence and needs inspired him to regain the use of his left side. Through dedicated physical and occupational therapy, SFC Peters relearned how to walk. His journey took a positive turn upon joining the Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU), where he embraced the transformative world of adaptive sports.

Competing in the Warrior Games for Team Army not only honors his personal achievements but also acknowledges the support of his family, friends, and healthcare providers, especially his physical therapist, Justin Hoover. SFC Peters participation in the games will symbolize the strength and resilience developed through his recovery journey.

## ADAM PROCTOR

RANK  
SSG

STATUS  
Active Duty

HOMETOWN  
Denver, CO

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Fort Campbell, TN

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Below the Knee Amputee

EVENTS  
Cycling  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Sitting Volleyball  
Swimming  
Track



SSG Adam Proctor has proudly served in the U.S. Army since 2006. His distinguished career includes two deployments to Iraq from Fort Bliss: first to Mosul in 2007 and then to Amarah in 2009. After his deployments, SSG Proctor spent three years stationed in Tripoli, working in the emergency room. He later transitioned to San Antonio, taking on the role of an instructor.

Following his tenure as an instructor, SSG Proctor was assigned to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell. In October 2020, he experienced a life-changing event when he lost his leg. Despite this significant challenge, he was evaluated in June 2023 and found fit for duty. SSG Proctor continues to serve with dedication at Blanchfield Army Community Hospital (BACH) at Fort Campbell.

SSG Proctor is also a devoted family man, married with five boys ranging in age from nine to 17.

## ALEXANDER ROBISON

RANK  
SGT

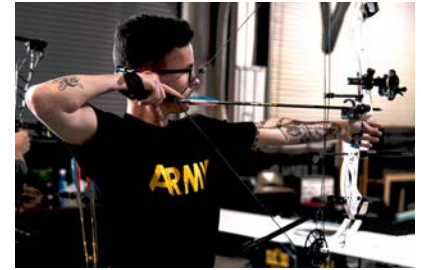
STATUS  
National Guard

HOMETOWN  
Youngstown, OH

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Walter Reed National Military  
Medical Center

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Pancreas Injury  
Spleen Injury

EVENTS  
Archery  
Precision Air Sports  
Sitting Volleyball  
Track  
Wheelchair Rugby



SGT Alexander Robison from Youngstown, Ohio, joined the Army in 2017 as a 91B - Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic. His service took a dramatic turn when he was wounded in a suicide drone strike in Syria on March 23, 2023, leading to significant internal injuries. Following the incident, he was treated at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) and spent considerable time in the Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU).

During his recovery, SGT Robison embarked on a remarkable physical and emotional transformation, utilizing the support and resources of the SRU to regain his strength and endurance. He is now eager to represent Team Army in the Warrior Games, viewing his participation as a testament to his personal growth, resilience, and camaraderie. These games are not just athletic events for SGT Robison but milestones in a journey marked by perseverance and support from his family and the SRU community.

Dedicated to inspiring others, he continues to push his limits in recovery and beyond. Outside of his military commitments, SGT Robison enjoys playing soccer and riding his motorcycle, activities that reflect his resilience and passion for life.

## VICTORIA ROLLIN

RANK  
1LT

STATUS  
Active Duty

HOMETOWN  
Beaver Falls, NY

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Fort Liberty, NC

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Bipolar Disorder

EVENTS  
Cycling  
Swimming  
Track



1LT Victoria Rollin, stationed at Fort Liberty, North Carolina, has demonstrated remarkable resilience and strength in the face of adversity. During her last deployment, she encountered significant mental health challenges, necessitating a medical evacuation back to the United States. Upon her return, she was assigned to the Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU), where she embarked on a journey of recovery and healing. 1LT Rollin's determination to regain her independence and well-being became a driving force in her life.

With a renewed sense of purpose, 1LT Rollin is excited to represent Team Army at the DoD Warrior Games. This opportunity allows her to showcase her resilience and commitment to overcoming obstacles, and to serve as an inspiration to her fellow soldiers and the broader community.

Beyond her military duties, 1LT Rollin is passionate about a variety of outdoor and physical activities. She finds solace and strength in practicing yoga, hiking through nature's trails, and paddle boarding on serene waters. Her love for music often accompanies these activities, providing a soundtrack to her moments of reflection and rejuvenation.

## NOAH RYDESKY

RANK  
SGT

STATUS  
Active Duty

HOMETOWN  
Loveland, CO

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Fort Carson, CO

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Frostbite

EVENTS  
Field  
Swimming  
Track



SGT Noah Rydesky's journey began in a wheelchair at the Fort Carson Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU), battling frostbite to both legs. Overwhelmed by embarrassment, anger, and depression, he initially struggled to find a new sense of purpose. Through months of rigorous physical therapy, SGT Rydesky discovered solace in swimming and weightlifting via the Adaptive Reconditioning Program (ARP), using these activities as his escape from despair.

The support and respect he received at the SRU were crucial, helping him to gradually regain his balance and confidence. Despite lingering nerve damage that prevents him from running due to persistent pain, SGT Rydesky has adapted his routine to include regular swimming, cycling, and gym sessions, keeping his spirit aligned with his former squad mates' pace.

SGT Rydesky views the opportunity to compete for Team Army in the DoD Warrior Games as both a personal triumph and a heartfelt thank you to those who have supported him. Driven by a guiding principle from his high school coach, "you'll throw up before you pass out and pass out before you give up", he is determined to continue pushing his limits, embodying physical, and mental resilience.

## AVERY SHORT

RANK  
SPC

STATUS  
National Guard

HOMETOWN  
Lincoln, NE

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Fort Carson, CO

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

EVENTS  
Cycling  
Swimming  
Track



SPC Avery Short from Lincoln, Nebraska, joined the Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU) in January 2023 to address her ongoing battle with PTSD. This step represented a crucial turning point. Initially overwhelmed with hopelessness, SPC Short discovered a new sense of vitality in the SRU's nurturing environment. Her time at the SRU not only rebuilt her confidence but also rekindled her enthusiasm for life. SPC Short learned to view her struggles not as weaknesses but as testaments to her resilience and strength.

The opportunity to compete in the first Warrior Games Challenge, out of cycle event, separate from the official DoD Warrior Games has profoundly affirmed her recovery journey, symbolizing both a regained self-assurance and the courage to seize previously daunting opportunities. Furthermore, it offers her a chance to experience the solidarity of team dynamics and draw inspiration from the resilience of fellow competitors.

Expressing her thanks, SPC Short is especially grateful to the Fort Carson SRU care team and Chaplain Zach Brueningsen, whose constant support was invaluable during her toughest times. Echoing Nelson Mandela's words, "The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall," SPC Short is committed to overcoming her challenges and continuing her upward trajectory.

## JASON SMITH

RANK  
SGT

STATUS  
Veteran

HOMETOWN  
Bryant, AL

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Bryant, AL

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Double Amputee

EVENTS  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Powerlifting  
Sitting Volleyball  
Wheelchair Rugby



SGT Jason Smith, originally from Bryant, Alabama, served as a U.S. Army Infantryman from 2009 to 2014. His service was dramatically altered in 2012 by an IED blast, which resulted in the loss of both legs and severe damage to his right hand. During his rehabilitation in San Antonio, Texas, SGT Smith engaged in a rigorous fitness regimen, a continuation of his pre-injury lifestyle. His relentless determination led him to transcend his physical limitations, crafting a stronger version of himself.

SGT Smith's recovery and achievements are deeply supported by his wife, who has been an unwavering source of encouragement, along with their two remarkable children. With resilience as his guiding force, he participated in the 2022 Warrior Games and the 2023 Invictus Games, finding camaraderie and a sense of purpose that are vital in his post-military life.

Selected once again to represent Team Army, SGT Smith views the Warrior Games as an opportunity to fuel his ongoing quest for excellence and to inspire others facing similar challenges. Beyond competition, he is passionate about fitness and cherishes time spent with his family, drawing strength and joy from these personal commitments.

## NOAH STRUNK

RANK  
SPC

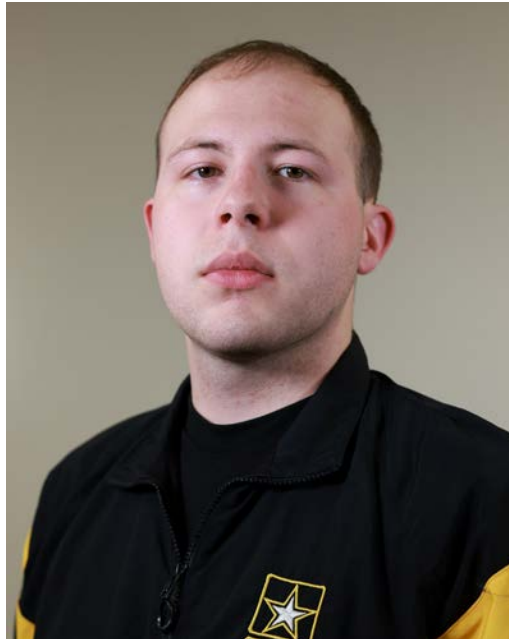
STATUS  
Active Duty

HOMETOWN  
Centerville, IN

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Fort Campbell, KY

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Broken Leg  
Dislocated Knee

EVENTS  
Cycling  
Swimming  
Track



SPC Noah Strunk is proudly representing Team Army for the second time at the DoD Warrior Games, having previously competed in the 2023 DoD Warrior Games Challenge. His return to the Warrior Games is not just a testament to his skill but also a much-needed boost of excitement and motivation, especially as he navigates the complexities of his Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) process.

At the age of 22, SPC Strunk brings more than just athletic prowess to the games; his favorite color is blue, he has a fondness for cows, and he enjoys long walks on the beach. SPC Strunk looks forward to building on his past experiences, learning from his coaches, engaging with fellow competitors, and embracing the camaraderie and competitive spirit of the Warrior Games once more.

## DERRICK THOMPSON

RANK  
SSG

STATUS  
Active Duty

HOMETOWN  
Chicago, IL

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Joint Base San Antonio, TX

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Diabetes Type II

EVENTS  
Archery  
Cycling  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Sitting Volleyball  
Track  
Wheelchair Basketball



SSG Derrick Thompson hails from Chicago, IL, and graduated from Lawton High School in Lawton, OK. He began his military career in the Air Force Reserves in 2004 and transitioned to the Army in 2005. Over the years, he has accrued 36 months of combat service overseas and has been honored with two Combat Action Badges.

During a tour in Korea in 2022, SSG Thompson was diagnosed with diabetes following a visit to the ER. Initially sent home due to his upbeat demeanor masking his symptoms, subsequent tests revealed a critical A1C level of around 14, leading to a two-week hospital stay where he was informed of the life-threatening nature of his condition. Adapting to his new medical regimen proved challenging, and he was almost discharged from the Army. Fortunately, his Continuation of Active-Duty waiver was approved in 2018, just in time to compete in the first Warrior Games Challenge, an out of cycle event, separate from the official DoD Warrior Games.

SSG Thompson is married and a father to three children. He currently works as a project manager at Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) and looks forward to retiring with 20 years of active service in July 2025. Passionate about competition, SSG Thompson plans to continue competing as long as possible, embracing the thrill and challenges of athletic pursuits.

## MELESETE TOGIA

RANK  
SPC

STATUS  
Active Duty

HOMETOWN  
Honolulu, HI

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Honolulu, HI

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
COVID-19  
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

EVENTS  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Powerlifting  
Sitting Volleyball



SPC Melesete Togia, from Honolulu, Hawaii, once found solace in her serene hometown surroundings—spending time at the beach, in the gym, hiking, canoeing with her daughter, and baking. However, her life changed dramatically when she tested positive for COVID-19 during her deployment in Iraq on September 4, 2021, leading to an emergency evacuation to Germany.

After a critical 20-day battle on life support and surviving over 10 resuscitations, SPC Togia faced profound personal challenges. Her marriage ended, and she experienced strains in other relationships. During this difficult period, the SRU provided invaluable support, helping her on her recovery journey. The Army Trials offered her a platform to connect with others facing similar struggles, where she found renewed hope and resilience.

SPC Togia is now set to compete in the 2024 DoD Warrior Games. This milestone highlights her strength and perseverance. She credits the Army Rehabilitation Program (ARP) gardening group and her gym community for their support and camaraderie. Guided by the Quranic principle: “Nothing will happen to us, except what God has written for us,” her participation in the Warrior Games symbolizes her commitment to overcoming adversity.

## Janmiguel TORRES-CRUZ

RANK  
SPC

STATUS  
Active Duty

HOMETOWN  
Ponce, PR

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Fort Stewart, GA

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Anterior Cruciate Ligament

EVENTS  
Cycling  
Field  
Sitting Volleyball  
Swimming  
Wheelchair Basketball  
Wheelchair Rugby



SPC Janmiguel Torres-Cruz sustained a left knee injury in Poland and was subsequently MEDEVAC'd to Fort Stewart's SRU. Initially, the injury's impact on his life was challenging and disheartening. However, the dedicated SRU team provided unwavering support, helping him regain confidence and aiding his recovery.

A lifelong sports enthusiast, SPC Torres-Cruz rediscovered his passion through the adaptive reconditioning programs offered by the SRU. The adaptive sports and support from the AR team rekindled the fire in his heart and mind, pushing him to achieve better health and well-being. He is deeply grateful to the AR team for their relentless encouragement and belief in his potential.

As his time at the SRU draws to a close, SPC Torres-Cruz reflects on his growth as a soldier and individual. He believes that a positive mindset can uncover opportunities in everything. Competing with Team Army and alongside fellow soldiers and veterans who have faced similar challenges is one of the most gratifying experiences for him. SPC Torres-Cruz encourages everyone to believe in themselves, emphasizing that a positive attitude leads to finding opportunities in every circumstance.

## MICHAEL VILLAGRAN

RANK  
SPC

STATUS  
Veteran

HOMETOWN  
Houston, TX

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Houston, TX

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Below the Knee Amputee

EVENTS  
Cycling  
Field  
Sitting Volleyball  
Swimming  
Track  
Wheelchair Rugby



SPC Michael Villagran, a U.S. Army veteran, represented Team Army at the 2022 DoD Warrior Games. After losing his leg, Michael feared his active lifestyle was over. However, through the Army Recovery Care Program (ARCP) and Adaptive Sports, he discovered that his journey was far from finished. Adaptive sports not only revived his passion for athletics but also opened new doors, leading him to join Team USA as a Para Skeleton Slider.

Looking ahead, Michael is excited to represent Team Army at the 2024 DoD Warrior Games, where he aims to secure a medal. This experience has transformed his life, proving that setbacks can lead to incredible new beginnings.

## ANNA WALKER

RANK  
CPT

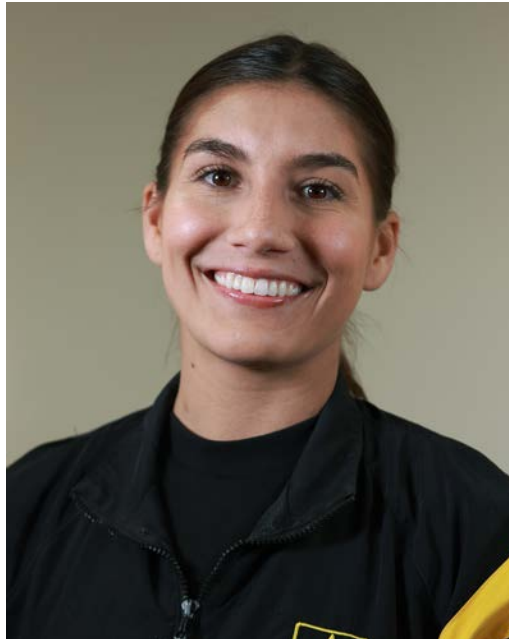
STATUS  
Active Duty

HOMETOWN  
Augusta, GA

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Fort Carson, CO

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Compound Leg Fracture  
Pelvic Fracture  
Spinal Fracture  
Broken Ribs

EVENTS  
Cycling  
Swimming  
Track



CPT Anna Walker, a 27-year-old finance officer from Augusta, Georgia, graduated from Georgia Southern University in 2019 before being stationed at Fort Carson, Colorado. Her life took an unexpected turn on January 4, 2020, when a skiing accident resulted in severe injuries, including a compound fracture of her left leg, six broken ribs, multiple pelvis and spinal fractures, and a traumatic brain injury. “The Soldier Recovery Unit at Ft. Carson became my haven, aiding in my recovery and eventual return to duty.”

In June 2022, a Lupus diagnosis further reshaped her path, leading to another stay at the SRU and ultimately to a medical discharge. “The SRU played a crucial role in my healing journey, offering a supportive community.” While her injuries altered her physical abilities, CPT Walker adapted to new ways of doing things. She acknowledges that managing Lupus remains a continuous learning process.

CPT Walker is eager to represent Team Army at the 2024 DoD Warrior Games with pride, a huge smile, and determination. “I want to thank my family, friends, and the Fort Carson SRU for their steadfast care and encouragement!”

## HANNAH WRIGHT

RANK  
CPT

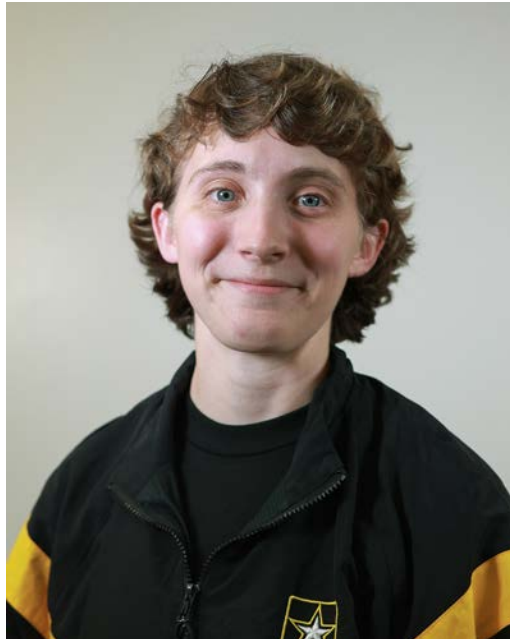
STATUS  
Active Duty

HOMETOWN  
Austin, TX

CURRENT LOCATION/SRU  
Fort Sam Houston, TX

INJURY OR ILLNESS  
Ovarian Cancer

EVENTS  
Archery  
Cycling  
Field  
Indoor Rowing  
Powerlifting  
Precision Air Sports  
Swimming  
Track



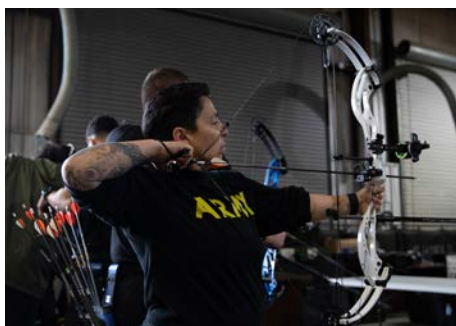
Before CPT Hannah Wright came to the Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU), she served as an Executive Officer for a Light Infantry Company and was eager to advance her career. However, on January 4th, 2023, her plans were abruptly changed when she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Within a week, she said goodbye to her soldiers and began her treatment.

During this challenging time, CPT Wright learned about the SRU at Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA). Her time at JBSA has been crucial for her mental, emotional, and physical recovery following surgery and chemotherapy. Her oncologist emphasized that it was time for the Army to take care of her, and the SRU has fulfilled that role.

CPT Wright's occupational and physical therapy team introduced her to adaptive sports and encouraged her to compete, understanding how much she missed having an outlet for her competitive spirit.

Training for the Warrior Games has reinvigorated her confidence, even after the significant changes she has experienced. CPT Wright looks forward to representing Team Army with renewed strength and determination, grateful for the support that has helped her rediscover her resilience.

## ARCHERY



**DAVID WARE**  
Coaching Staff

Archery is a precision sport with two disciplines and two major events: individual and team competition. Archers choose either compound or recurve based on preference. Compound bows use a levering system, while recurve bows rely on the archer's strength and one string. Male and female archers compete in standing, seated, or visually impaired divisions for both disciplines. All archers shoot at 18 meters from the shooting line to the target in multiple timed rounds. The individual competition has qualification and elimination rounds to determine gold, silver, and bronze.

### TEAM ARMY ATHLETES

Luis Avila  
Abel Baez  
John Michael Britton  
Gene Calantoc

Bernice Carmona  
Nathan Degen  
Bianca Hayden  
Matthew Hovey

Justin Patrick Lane  
Justin Mathers  
Alexander Robison  
Derrick Thompson

Hannah Wright

## CYCLING



**GREG MILLER**  
Coaching Staff

As in the Paralympic Games, the Warrior Games include wheeled upright bikes and arm-powered handcycles, but they also feature recumbent trikes, which are not yet in international competition. This makes the Warrior Games more inclusive than the Paralympics. The Warrior Games sport includes two events: a mass start event, where racers in each class start together and the first across the line wins, requiring tactical awareness, fitness, preparation, and teamwork. The time trial is a simpler contest against the clock, where the riders who cover the course in the least time wins.

### TEAM ARMY ATHLETES

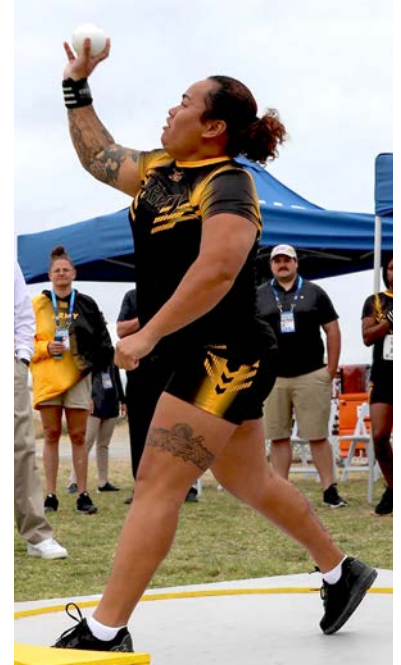
Luis Avila  
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Anna Walker  
Hannah Wright

## FIELD



**SPENCER TYLER**  
Coaching Staff

Warrior Games Field caters to athletes with diverse physical abilities, enabling them to compete in traditional field events. Customized equipment, such as throwing chairs and straps, accommodate athletes with mobility limitations or upper body impairments. Through adaptive field programs, athletes can overcome physical barriers and participate fully in the sport, showcasing their strength, skill, and determination on the field alongside their peers.

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## INDOOR ROWING



**GREG QUARLES**  
Coaching Staff

Indoor rowing machines, also known as ergometers or ergs, engage both your upper and lower body on every stroke. This strengthens and tones muscles, improves endurance, and benefits your heart and lungs. It's a common misconception that rowing works only your arms; rowing is a full-body workout. According to the American Fitness Professionals Association, the rowing stroke consists of 65%-75% leg work and 25%-35% upper body work. In the Warrior Games Rowing Events, there is a category for every ability, allowing athletes to use adaptations as needed, leaving the "dis" in disABILITY out of the equation.

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## POWERLIFTING



**ADRIANE WILSON**  
Coaching Staff

Para Powerlifting is an adaptation of the bench press for athletes, separated by gender into different weight categories. In the Warrior Games, athletes perform three attempts in the bench press, aiming for the most weight lifted in their class. A notable difference in the equipment setup is a long bench where athletes lie with their legs and feet secured and elevated to perform the lift. This allows for greater stability and ensures safety while lifting, enabling athletes to focus on their strength and technique.

### TEAM ARMY ATHLETES

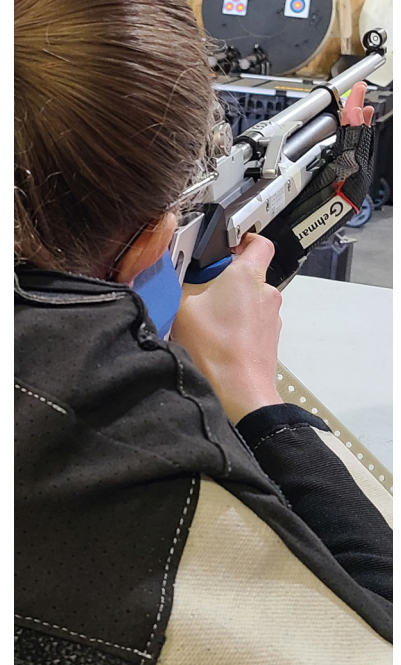
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## PRECISION AIR SPORTS



**ROBERT MCMULLIN**  
Coaching Staff

In Precision Air Sports at the Warrior Games, the athlete tries to hit the center of the target with a pneumatic air rifle, which is only 0.5mm across, about the size of the period at the end of this sentence. Doing this once is hard enough, but our athletes train not only their physical abilities but also their mental capabilities to perform this repeatedly. It is this mental awareness that helps them recover, using the techniques and skills learned in their everyday lives.

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## SITTING VOLLEYBALL



**LINDA GOMEZ**  
Coaching Staff

Sitting volleyball is a modified discipline of volleyball that can be played by all with or without disabilities. It is very similar to traditional volleyball, but there is one main difference: in sitting volleyball, a part of the body between the seat and the shoulder must be touching the court when making or attempting ball contact. Players use their hands to play the ball and to move on the floor as well. Teams are allowed three touches of the ball before it must cross over the net into the opposing team's half of the court. The most exciting rule allows the participant to block an opponent's serve!

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## SWIMMING



**CARIANNE GARNER**  
Coaching Staff

In the Warrior Games, Competitive Swimming demands rigorous training and precise technique as athletes strive to outperform each other in various strokes and distances, pushing their limits in pursuit of speed and excellence. It's a sport where split-second decisions and immense physical endurance converge in a quest for victory, fostering camaraderie among swimmers while showcasing feats of athleticism in the water.

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## TRACK



**ROSS ALEWINE**  
Coaching Staff

Warrior Games Track provides opportunities for athletes of all abilities to participate and excel in various track events. Through innovative equipment and modifications, such as specialized racing wheelchairs and prosthetics, athletes compete on equal footing. This program promotes empowerment and athletic achievement, fostering a welcoming environment for athletes to showcase their skills and determination. Track events also include guided support for visually impaired athletes, ensuring every participant can fully engage, and compete at their best.

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## WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL



**RODNEY WILLIAMS**  
Coaching Staff

Wheelchair Basketball is not only a confrontational sport, but also has numerous benefits that set it apart. It promotes physical health and improves athletic ability. It allows individuals with disabilities to actively participate in sports and experience competition. Additionally, it enhances communication and social skills as players work together in a team. Wheelchair basketball requires critical cognitive skills and adaptability, as players react quickly in changing environments. It provides a unique physical challenge, with high-intensity movements, and frequent offensive-defensive conversions.

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## WHEELCHAIR RUGBY



**JOEL RODRIGUEZ**  
Coaching Staff

Wheelchair Rugby is a sport of both physicality and mental fortitude. Not only does it provide a positive outlet through exercise, but Wheelchair Rugby also fosters camaraderie and community among athletes. In the Warrior Games, it combines skills from Wheelchair Basketball and the physical contact of Hockey, creating the most exciting wheelchair sport. Additionally, Wheelchair Rugby promotes resilience and teamwork, encouraging athletes to push their limits while building strong bonds with their teammates.

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2024  
JUNE 21ST - JUNE 30TH

ORLANDO, FLORIDA



# TEAM ARMY

## ATHLETE BIO BOOK

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
**WARRIOR  
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