



# ARMED FORCES SPORTS



## 2007 REVIEW

### 4<sup>th</sup> Military World Games Hyderabad and Mumbai, India 14-21 October 2007

(More than 150 U.S. Armed Forces athletes experienced a week of "friendship through sport" with peers from 101 nations)

## U.S. ARMED FORCES MEDAL WINNERS

### BOXING:

SGT Andrew Shepherd (91KG+) Army **GOLD**  
SGT John Franklin (48-51KG) Army **SILVER**  
SSG Joe Guzman (81-91KG) Army **SILVER**  
LCpl Samuel Martinez (60-64KG) Marine Corps **BRONZE**

### PARACHUTING:

#### **Women's Team Formation GOLD**

SFC Elisa Tennyson Army  
SFC Angela Nichols Army  
SFC Karen Morrison Army  
SSG Norma Estrella Army  
**\*\*Set new CISM Record\*\***

#### **Women's Team Event SILVER**

LTC Rhonda Reichel USAF  
SFC Elisa Tennyson Army  
SFC Angela Nichols Army  
SFC Karen Morrison Army  
SSG Norma Estrella Army  
SSG Larry Miller (Videographer) Army

#### **Men's Team Formation SILVER**

SFC Brian Krause Army  
SFC Kurt Isenbarger Army  
SFC Matt Davidson Army  
SFC John Hoover Army  
SSG Larry Miller (Videographer) Army

### SWIMMING:

Ensign Joseph Smutz (50M Freestyle) Navy **BRONZE**

### TRACK & FIELD:

1LT Paul Gensic (Pole Vault) Air Force **SILVER**

### TRIATHLON:

2ndLt Justine Whipple Marine Corps **SILVER**



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## **Armed Forces athletes discover ‘friendship through sport’**

By Tim Higgs  
FMWRC Public Affairs

HYDERABAD, India – More than 150 U.S. Armed Forces athletes experienced a week of “friendship through sport” with peers from 101 nations at the 4<sup>th</sup> CISM Military World Games Oct. 14-21 in Hyderabad and Mumbai.

The Conseil International du Sport Militaire plays host to Military World Championships in more than 20 sports every year, but the Military World Games – contested every four years – is its premiere event.

The Games debuted at Rome in 1995 and were hosted in 1999 by Zagreb, Croatia; and in 2003 by Catania, Italy. The 2007 Military World Games were the largest sporting event in India’s long, storied history.

“It is fundamental for us to have the best military athletes competing,” said CISM President Brig. Gen. Gianni Gola of Italy. “And we want to extend our values by developing friendship through sport. The ultimate goal is peace.”

The Opening Ceremony resembled opening night at the Olympics, complete with military pomp and circumstance throughout a colorful, 4-hour celebration of Indian culture that uniquely expressed CISM’s quest for world peace.

President of India Shrimati Pratibha Devisingh Patil, the first woman to serve as Supreme Commander of the Indian Armed Forces, officially declared the Games open.

U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program boxers and Army Golden Knights skydivers won seven of Team USA’s 10 medals. The other medals came in swimming, triathlon and track and field.

Heavyweight boxer Staff Sgt. Andrew Shepherd and the women’s formation skydiving team won gold medals on the penultimate day of the Games.

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"Besides my five-year-old son being born, this is certainly the greatest moment of my life," said Shepherd, 26, a WCAP boxer stationed at Fort Carson, Colo. "Seeing our flag being raised and hearing our national anthem being played made me think about all the Soldiers serving overseas in harm's way."

When Shepherd climbed into the ring to face Germany's Erken Teper in the final boxing bout of the Games, he thought Team USA was still competing for its first and only gold medal.

"Honestly, with no Americans having won a gold medal, the pressure got to me," admitted Shepherd, who fought tentatively in the first round. "It took a couple of hard shots to wake me up."

Had Shepherd known the U.S. women's formation skydiving team had secured a gold medal earlier in the day, he probably would have gotten busy earlier in the fray.

"It would've helped," Shepherd said. "It would've helped."

All-Army boxing coach Basheer Abdullah knew the scenario but wanted Shepherd to believe Team USA's fate still rested on the heavyweight's broad shoulders.

"I'm sure that our military mission is impacting a lot of our sports, so we wanted to top it off by getting that gold medal," Abdullah said. "We definitely didn't want our country to go back home without any gold, so the pressure was on us and we responded."

Shepherd responded by exhibiting the ferociousness Abdullah has been seeking since the heavyweight from Fort Eustis, Va., joined WCAP in January of 2006.

"Ever since the start of the third round of his first fight, he's turned it up," Abdullah said of Shepherd's performances at the Military World Games. "He showed me what I've been looking for since he's been in WCAP. He had a hell of a performance in the semifinals. That was the type of boxing I've been waiting to see for a very long time. He really let it go. He was mean. He was powerful. He was physical."

For only the second time in his boxing career – the first coming at the U.S. Olympic Boxing Team Trials in Houston – Shepherd had to weigh in for four fights in one week. He came up two bouts short in Houston. This time, he went the distance.

"Everything clicked at the right time," said Shepherd, who was inspired by Army WCAP teammates Sgt. John Franklin and Staff Sgt. Joe Guzman, who won silver medals at 51 and 91 kilograms respectively.

Making his international boxing debut, Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Samuel Martinez of Camp Lejeune, N.C., won a bronze medal in the 64-kilogram division.

Abdullah said he could not have asked for more from his team.

"This is, by far, the best team performance by this class of boxers in this quadrennial," Abdullah said. "They've really started to show that they are growing as boxers. We just hope that they continue to grow and it carries over until 2012."

Nobody in this group of boxers had more than 20 bouts on his resume at the 2006 U.S. National Championships. Although Staff Sgt. Christopher Downs is the Army's only representative on the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team, Shepherd, who finished fourth at the Olympic Trials, said the Military World Games experience has him Olympic dreaming again.

"This was a great way to close out the year," Shepherd said. "I couldn't think of any better way to end this quad than for the U.S. Armed Forces boxing team to go home with four medals."

The U.S. Armed Forces men's and women's parachuting teams combined to win three medals in record-setting fashion.

Sgts. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Elisa Tennyson, Angela Nichols and Karen Morrison teamed with Staff Sgt. Norma Estrella and videographer Staff Sgt. Larry Miller to win gold in women's formation skydiving with an eight-round total of 171 points, followed by Norway (160) and France (137).

Along the way, the U.S. women established a CISM record by executing 26 freefall formations in 35 seconds, surpassing their previous mark of 25, set at the 2004 CISM World Military Parachuting Championships in Austria. They also teamed with Air Force Lt. Col. Rhonda Reichel to win silver in the women's team overall event.

"This is the big one for us," said team leader Tennyson, who has more than 9,000 jumps since 1987. "For us, it's about winning CISM, the U.S. Championships and the World Championships. The CISM Military World Games is our Olympics because parachuting is not an Olympic sport."

On the men's side, Army Golden Knights Sgts. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Brian Krause, Kurt Isenbarger, Matthew Davidson, John Hoover and Miller won a silver medal in formation skydiving. They, too, set a CISM record with 33 formations that Belgium later eclipsed.

Air Force 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Paul Gensic won a silver medal in the pole vault with a jump of 16 feet, 8.75 inches on the second day of track and field competition. Marine Corps 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Justine Whipple struck silver in the women's triathlon on the final day of competition in Mumbai, site of the sailing and triathlon venues. Navy swimmer Ensign Joe Smutz won bronze in the 50-meter freestyle.

Army WCAP Capt. Philip Johnston's fifth-place finish in the 96-kilogram division highlighted the U.S. Greco-Roman wrestling team's two-day tournament. Johnston recently returned from the World Wrestling Championships in Baku, Azerbaijan, where he served as a training partner for Army Staff Sgt. Dremiel Byers, whose bronze-medal performance secured Team USA's inaugural Greco-Roman world team title.

In Hyderabad, Johnston felt like he was right back at the World Championships.

"There are people who win the World Championships and come here and lose," said Johnston, 30, a former All-Air Force wrestler who joined Army's WCAP two years ago. "This was a huge gear-up for the Olympic Trials."

Johnston cherished the Military World Games experience.

"The people of India are the friendliest that I've ever been around," he said. "I love the food. It's been neat to meet people from 101 countries. It's been an incredible experience. With the Opening Ceremonies, this is the second-best thing to the Olympics."

The U.S. women's soccer team rebounded from a 4-0 loss to the Peoples' Democratic Republic of Korea and a 1-0 loss to Germany to finish fifth in the Military World Games tournament with a 3-0 victory over Canada.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's powerful squad featured 11 players from their national team that reached the quarterfinals of the 2007 Women's World Cup and won the FIFA U-20 Women's World Championship in 2006.

"The best part about our team is that we didn't give up," said Capt. Laura Schroeder of the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency at Fort Belvoir, Va. "We could have said it is two-nothing and just gave up. Instead, we played until the last minute. Our halftime talk was positive and supportive. We really are a close team."

Despite breaking her left wrist during the second half against North Korea, Army Capt. Emily Nay returned to the pitch the next day against Germany. Goalkeeper Capt. Stacie Bortz of Hurlburt Field Air Force Base near Fort Walton Beach, Fla., kept Team USA close in every game and was impressed to see CISM's motto come to life on playing fields.

"It's so neat to get to meet other people from other countries," Bortz said. "We have not

only a common bond of the military, but the common bond of the love for sports. We're all here for a purpose: to represent the country and meet new people who do exactly what we do. This is our Olympics, but it doesn't end today. Let's continue on."

That's the type of message CISM officials hope their athletes will spread throughout the world. Russian athletes won 100 medals, including 42 gold, followed by China (73 medals), Germany (30), Italy (29) and Ukraine (26).

"We are very young, but still strong," Gola said. "We strive to keep our competitive sports at a high level, but we also place a lot of importance on values. We are considered the unique international sports organization. Thousands and thousands of military athletes, coaches, team captains and chiefs of mission are traveling around the world to attend our events."

The U.S. delegation consisted of 54 Army, 38 Air Force, 30 Navy, eight Marine Corps, two Coast Guard and 36 civilians serving as coaches, technical reps, trainers and other support personnel.

"It was a bit overwhelming at first when we got to Indiantown Gap and saw all of the athletes there," Shepherd said of staging in Pennsylvania for two days before departing to India. "It just dawns on you that you are among some of the world's best athletes, and there's nothing like it."

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Cutlines for photos:

***“Team India Leaves All Others in Their Wake”***

By Staff Sgt. Brian D. Lehnhardt  
U.S. Armed Forces Sports Public Affairs

***Mumbai, India:*** Once again, competition today was delayed by ill-directed and sometimes non-existent wind conditions. But any heats completed were only a formality, as the quota required to award medals had been fulfilled. However, conditions did improve late into the afternoon, allowing 24 teams one last crack at beating the home town heroes: Team India.

But no one could match the Indian’s skill and ability to control the wind and rudder. They sailed to a decisive victory in today’s only heat, and sealed their overall win for the Gold Medal. France took the Silver, and Spain took Bronze.

“This is their home waters, their boats, and they practice in them,” skipper Lt. Cdr. David Fagen explained. “They really didn’t show us anything spectacular in terms of their racing, but they were really good at going faster, straight line and just being able to tack and go around the marks. They were really comfortable in the Enterprise dinghy. It’s great to see them do so well. They’ve struggled in other types of boats in other competitions, and it’s great to see India finally win a medal.”

Team USA finished 12<sup>th</sup> in today’s heats. Before today’s start, they were 16<sup>th</sup> overall. Official results beyond the medal winners were not available at the time of publication.

“We started pretty terribly today,” remembered Fagen. “We were fouled at the start and had no where to go. So we started last and had to work our way back up. So we’re happy with that. We’re more comfortable in the boat now, given we weren’t comfortable with the boat when we started. I think if we had a little more practice, we would have done much better.”

Indian Navy Brigadier Yashwant Singh, a host nation Race Committee member and a constant welcoming face for all the contestants on the docks, expressed his concern about Team USA’s ability to perform from the start, but was encouraged by their new found skills. “I saw them gradually improving day by day...initially perhaps they could not read the winds and the tides...but they improved their performance on and on. Maybe with more practice, they could have been first in the fight.”

So what is Team USA taking away from this competition? “Our lessons learned are to get the type of boat you are going to race into the States, and practice with it before hand, so that you can at least know that you can sail the boat effectively before you get to the event. We were the only team (I believe) that didn’t compete (in last year’s CISM

National Tournament), so it's hard to race against teams who've had time in the boat and jumping into something you don't know."

Fagen's crewmember had the same idea. "When ever you come into a competition completely blind to it, you just want to have a starting point, and go up from there, and I believe we were able to do that," said crewman Lt. Cdr. Erica Kraft. "We made some mistakes, but we did the best we could. I feel that Dave and I have some pretty good skills as sailors." But considering their unfamiliarity with the Enterprise boats, Kraft feels "a lesser skilled sailor would not have finished the regatta as high as we did."

Lt. Cdr. Kraft gave deserved kudos to the team's support staff and crew. "I'm really happy with our coach (Army Maj.) Brian Doyle," said Kraft. "He was very energetic and offered the best advice he could. He was there for us with everything we needed. Our 'pit crew' (Navy Lt.) Mike Strauss was very good at keeping our spirits up and taking care of the boat for us. Anything we needed, he was 'Johnny on the spot' for us. And of course Cdr. (Catharine) Ripley, or team captain; she was always energetic and always taking care of us. She dealt with all the external and unseen parts of this ordeal. 'Team Mom' was what we called her." Of course the team couldn't help but thank Lt. Strauss' wife, Amanda, who flew to India to watch her husband's team compete. "She was a definite bonus being around us to keep our spirits up and help us with our gear." All in all, "this was a very pleasant team to work with," Kraft said. "Sometimes you're not as lucky."

For Fagen, there was more to the competition than met the eye. "To me this is more than an event to come to win. It's being an ambassador for the U.S., and getting to spread friendship to different countries. It allows us to show our flag and to show that we're not the 'big ugly country' that in a time like this are shown to be by some. So it's real refreshing to be able to rub shoulders with and sit down with people from other countries that are in militaries like us and just be friends."

Kraft sees things in a different perspective. "I think it's been eye opening to me to come to India of all places and discover how well their military is organized, how proud they are, and learn more about the Indian organization, as well as other countries. Every military seems to be organized in a different manner. Some countries here have much larger militaries than others. And in some country's militaries, all athletes do is sail more full time rather than work full time as a military officer or enlisted service member.

"I just look forward to maybe someday returning to India in some capacity, or just trying to spread the word within our own military to participate in this event. Because it's way more about winning; it's a lot more about global connection, military wise, because there's a lot more important things we need to worry about as service men and women than winning a sailing event."

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