



WOUNDED WARRIOR

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Send your comments, feedback

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2011 Warrior Games

Deadline nears for Air Force athletes

As the application deadline for the 2011 Warrior Games draws near, some Airmen are wondering if they are even qualified to participate based on their medical conditions and combat experience. They will be surprised to learn the field of qualified applicants is much broader than they think.

The Warrior Games is an Olympic-style competition open to all wounded, ill and injured active, Guard, Reserve, retired or separated Airmen. A potential athlete does not have to have a visible condition, nor does their condition have to be combat related in order for them to compete.

Air Force officials are seeking participants to compete in seven events: archery, cycling, basketball, shooting, swimming, track and field, and volleyball. Even people without



Air Force team member Matt Sanders earned a gold in the 400-meter race during the Warrior Games at the U.S. Air Force Academy track in Colorado Springs, Colo., May 14, 2010. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Desiree N. Palacios)

athletic experience can apply.

There will be two training camps with experienced coaches before the actual games May 16 through 21 in Colorado Springs, Colo.

The Warrior Games is an official Air Force event and participation in the training camps and the games is being funded by the service.

For more information about the 2011 Warrior Games, contact Capt. Courtnee Cruz at courtnee.cruz@pentagon.af.mil, your recovery care coordinator, or your case manager. Applications due Jan. 11. Apply now!

[Click Here](#)

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Partners build high-tech hands for warriors

by Cheryl Pellerin
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON -- Scientists and technologists are working with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency to give arms and hands back to warriors who lose them in battle.

Army Col. (Dr.) Geoffrey Ling, the DARPA program manager, talked about the program Nov. 19 to a TEDx Pentagon audience. TEDx Pentagon is a military-focused speaker series.

"When you lose the arm anywhere along its course, you also lose the hand," Dr. Ling said. "And this hand is truly remarkable. It is the most complex biological tool that exists in nature today.

"Even at the finest hospitals in America today, the solution to a missing hand usually is a hook," Dr. Ling said, "because making a hand is thought to be impossible."

But it is not impossible if you work at DARPA, he said.

Dr. Ling said that during his first deployment to Afghanistan in 2003, he was frustrated by being able to help patients survive, but not to completely restore them to health, especially if they had lost limbs, eyesight or brain function.

When Dr. Ling returned from Afghanistan, he was invited to join DARPA.



Users wear and control, without surgery, an advanced prosthetic arm developed under the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency's Revolutionizing Prosthetics program. (Courtesy photo)

"And let me tell you, it is a magical place," he said. "The leaders there are visionaries. They exhort us daily to challenge what is commonly held to be impossible and instead look at it as possible, and if so, make it probable."

[Read More](#)

Intrepid center provides new level of warfighter care

by Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

BETHESDA, Md. -- When it officially opened its doors in June, the National Intrepid Center of Excellence at the National Naval Medical Center here set out to provide a new level of care for warfighters suffering traumatic brain injuries and psychological

disorders.

Six months later, as it continues to build staff to reach full operational capability, the center is making a difference in the lives of service members struggling to deal with the unseen, signature wounds of war with hopes they can continue their military service.

"Our vision is to be an

instrument of hope, healing, discovery and learning," said Navy Capt. Thomas Beeman, a reservist recalled to active duty to lend his civilian health care administration expertise to help stand up the facility. "We are living out that vision and trying to meet those needs."

[Read More](#)

Smoking cessation approach impacts veterans with PTSD

WASHINGTON -- Smoking cessation treatment that is made part of mental health care for veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder improves quit rates, according to a Department of Veterans Affairs study published in the Dec. 8 Journal of the American Medical Association.

"The smoking cessation techniques used in this new approach will give veterans an

important step toward a better quality of life," said VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Robert Petzel. "Veterans will be at a lower risk for cardiovascular or lung disease if they do not smoke."

For more details, click on the icon below.



Airman injured in Afghanistan passes away

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio (AFNS) -- An 88th Communication Squadron voice network systems technician wounded in action one year ago in Afghanistan, died Nov. 28.

Senior Airman Tre Porfirio passed away while visiting friends over the Thanksgiving holiday in Missouri. He was 22 years old.

"We are all deeply saddened by the tragic passing of Airman Porfirio," said Col. Amanda Gladney, the 88th Air Base Wing commander. "During his all too short time on this Earth, he truly made a difference, both in trying to help create a free and stable society in Afghanistan, and in stretching the boundaries of medical knowledge. He was a warrior and a patriot who gave his all to a grateful nation. Our thoughts and prayers go out to

his family and friends during this very difficult time."

Airman Porfirio's story captured the attention of the nation because of the heroic actions taken to save his life after he was shot in the back three times by an insurgent during an operation in Afghanistan on Nov. 21, 2009.

After several surgeries, doctors at Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, D.C., determined his damaged pancreas had to be removed.

They worked with doctors at the University of Miami to salvage islet cells from his pancreas. Those cells were injected into Airman Porfirio's liver, allowing that organ to begin producing the insulin normally produced by the pancreas. This procedure had never before been performed on a trauma patient.

The precise cause of



Col. Amanda Gladney pins a Purple Heart on Senior Airman Tre Porfirio's chest July 8 at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force in Dayton, Ohio, during the 15th Heroes Welcoming Heroes event. Airman Porfirio passed away Nov. 28 while visiting friends. (U.S. Air Force photo/AI Bright)

Airman Porfirio's death is unknown.

Program offers warriors a chance for dive certification



Master Sgt. Ray Schroeder, an Air Force Wounded Warrior, enjoys a recent dive excursion in Curacao sponsored by Soldiers Undertaking Disabled Scuba, or SUDS. (Courtesy photo)

Soldiers Undertaking Disabled Scuba, or SUDS, helps improve the lives of injured warriors returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Many of the warriors going through the program have received severe injuries. Those who are not able to perform all the skills required for open water diver certification have the chance to earn their scuba certification with a specially certified scuba instructor.

SUDS is located at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. It is a nonprofit organization and a chapter of the Wounded Warrior/Disabled Sports Project. It is totally dependent upon donations.

More information about the program can be found at sudsdiving.org.

Services and Resources

HOME

Are you in crisis? Are you feeling desperate, alone or hopeless? Call the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). This lifeline is a free, 24-hour hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Your call will be routed to the nearest crisis center to you. You can call for yourself or someone you care about, and each call is free and confidential. A network of more than 140 crisis centers nationwide is available 24/7.



[The Journey Home](#) website provides an informative and sensitive exploration of Traumatic Brain Injury, including information for patients, family members, and caregivers. Topics include types and symptoms of brain injury, TBI treatment and recovery, and helpful insights about the potential long-term effects of brain injury. Animation is used to help patients clearly understand the brain, and the results of injuries to different parts of the brain. Survivors and their caregivers share courageous stories about their own experiences, providing down-to-earth facts along with inspiration and hope.

The [Real Warriors Campaign](#) is an initiative launched by the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury to promote the processes of building resilience, facilitating recovery and supporting reintegration of returning service members, veterans and their families. Service members, veterans families and health professionals can find assistance through the campaign's website.



[www.ABILITYJobs.com](#) is the largest stand-alone resume bank for people with disabilities, helping companies fulfill their affirmative action compliance requirements and committed to expanding awareness about this job site to as many companies as possible.

[Service animals](#) can be trained to do multiple tasks that serve to mitigate conditions such as panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. The National Resource Directory offers information about service animals that are trained to assist people with disabilities, as well as a listing of related agencies.



[afterdeployment.org](#) offers a program that has been designed to provide support to service members who are healing after having experienced sexual trauma. You will hear from others who have experienced sexual trauma, learn coping skills that can be helpful in the healing process, and develop a plan for moving forward. Take an assessment or jump into the workshops to learn more about coping skills and the healing process.

Check out the videos of others who are dealing with similar experiences, and explore the e-library for in-depth information.

VA Update: Comprehensive veterans' benefits signed into law

by Jane Dulin
AW2 VA Liaison

Veterans Benefits Act of 2010 (H.R. 3219) was signed into law Oct. 13, by President Obama. Highlights of this bill include an increase in the amount of supplemental insurance for totally disabled veterans, and an opportunity for veterans to increase the amount of Veterans' Group Life Insurance coverage. Also, the bill makes severely burned individuals eligible for the Automobiles and Adaptive Equipment Benefit, and enhances the amount of the Automobile Grant to \$18,900 from the current \$11,000 limit. To read the bill in its entirety, click [here](#).

Upcoming events

Several 2011 Higher Ground Snowsports Camps take place in Sun Valley, Idaho, for disabled veterans with at least one combat tour supporting Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. These camps are for people with a traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, polytrauma and/or visual impairment. The following events are scheduled: Couples Snowsports camp, Jan. 9 to 14; Singles Snowsports, Feb. 6 to 11; Women's Snowsports, Feb. 27 to March 1. Camps are free to the qualified warrior and a supporter. The couples camp is free for a qualified warrior and their significant other. People interested in attending should contact Bert Gillette at 208-726-9298 Ext. 117, or send him an e-mail at bert@svasp.org.

The [National Veterans Wheelchair Games](#) -- Aug. 1 to 6 -- is an annual wheelchair sports competition offering 17 different sports to veterans who use wheelchairs. The games promote rehabilitation through rigorous competition in such events as basketball, rugby, softball, hand-cycling and others. A special "Kids Day" program allows children with disabilities to meet the athletes and be introduced to wheelchair sports. While past games have produced national and world-class champions, the games also provide opportunities for newly disabled veterans to gain sports skills and be exposed to other wheelchair athletes. For more information and to request an application, contact Andy Krieger at 202-416-7757 or send e-mail to andyk@pva.org. Application deadline is April 15.

The [National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic](#) promotes rehabilitation by instructing veterans with disabilities in adaptive Alpine and Nordic skiing, and introducing them to other adaptive recreational activities and sports. For many newly injured veterans, the clinic offers their first experience in winter sports and gives them the inspiration to take their rehabilitation to a higher level. Participants include veterans with spinal cord injuries, amputations, traumatic brain injuries, neurological challenges, and visual impairments. For more information, contact event director [Santo Trombetta](#) at 970-242-0731.

[Retreat weekends for caregivers](#) are filled with exciting opportunities for new friendships to grow. Participants frequently share that the weekend provided them with the opportunity to create support bonds that continue long after the conclusion of the retreat itself. All travel expenses to and from the retreat are paid by the Wounded Warrior Project; however, a credit card is needed when checking in for personal incidentals. The Friday and Monday surrounding the retreat weekend are primarily used for travel, and departure and arrival times are flexible. If you are interested in participating in a future retreat, please download and fill out an application and e-mail to caregivers@woundedwarriorproject.org (this e-mail address is being protected from spam bots, you need JavaScript enabled to view it) or fax to 904-296-7347 Attention: Caregiver Retreat. Contact Anna Frese at 904-296-7350 for more information.

For more information or to receive additional details on any of these events, contact your AFW2 case manager at 800-581-9437 or send an e-mail to afwounded.warrior@randolph.af.mil.

Do you need to update your contact information?

NOTE - Updates should be provided to: AFW2 Program Office, AFPC/Disabilities Branch, DEERS, DFAS, and the VA.

AFW2 Program Office – Call **800-581-9437** or via e-mail: afwounded.warrior@randolph.af.mil

AFPC Disabilities Branch – Call **210-565-5653**, or e-mail disability@randolph.af.mil

DEERS – Updating info in DEERS is accomplished in one of three ways:

Call **800-538-9552**

Visit a military base ID card issuance facility

Visit the website at: <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/address/indexAction.do>

DFAS – Online at "myPay" website: <https://mypay.dfas.mil>

VA – Call **800-827-1000** or visit their website at www.va.gov for the nearest VA office

