



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Warrior Transition Command

## **Live life tough: Army Warrior Trials athletes show resilience through sports**

**West Point, New York** — Specialist James Taylor’s tattoos cover his left and right arms, shoulders to wrists— commemorations of Family and friends and odes to his football star days in high school. “Live life tough or not at all” runs across his left shoulder, his grandmother’s response to whenever he would come complaining to her about something.

“Before I joined the Army I was an athlete in every sense of the word,” said the former basketball, football and track star. “Hearing the doctors, I thought I would never walk again,” he said, and for the first six months of his rehabilitation at the Warrior Transition Battalion (WTB) at Fort Sam Houston, Texas they were right. Taylor entered the WTB in July of 2012, after sustaining injuries while deployed in Afghanistan. He does not remember much of what happened after his vehicle struck an improvised explosive device (IED)— just waking up in a hospital to a diagnosis of two bulging disks in his back, two in his neck, ligament damage to his left ankle, spinal stenosis and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

“Being injured depresses you. You start to think ‘I can’t do the same thing, I can’t reach the same goals,’” said Taylor. Six months into his rehabilitation, Taylor was introduced to the WTB’s Soldier Adaptive Reconditioning Program, or SARP-Elite. The program matches recovering warriors with a sport or activity that they enjoy, and demonstrates how adaptive reconditioning positively impacts rehabilitation.

Master Sgt. Rhoden Galloway is part of the brains behind SARP-Elite. Also injured in Afghanistan and recovering at the WTB at Fort Sam Houston, he found that swimming helped him both physically and emotionally. Encouragement from coaches and others at the WTB led him to register for the 2011 Warrior Games. Three Warrior Games later Galloway is a 12-time medalist: five gold and seven silver.

After participating in the next three Warrior Games, Galloway and a handful of other wounded, ill and injured Soldiers and Veterans wanted to bridge the gap between participating in adaptive sports at the WTB and competing at the high level that Warrior Games demands. The team of Soldiers and Veterans wanted to prove that adaptive reconditioning can motivate wounded warriors to start to pick up the pieces and get their lives back on track. “SARP-Elite is a program that really, truly works,” he said. “It shows how sports are not just something for fun. Sports can lead to life after the military.”

Taylor, who was recently scouted and offered a college scholarship for his prowess in track, uses sports as his outlet as he recovers. “When I’m running track, I’m a track star. When I’m doing archery, I’m an archer. Nothing else matters. I don’t have to worry about my TBI, all I have to do is focus on the task,” he said.

Galloway and Taylor are competing at the 2014 U.S. Army Warrior Trials in shooting and swimming, and field, sitting volley ball, swimming and track respectively.

While both Soldiers feel that camaraderie is important, they are also fueled by competition. “I can guarantee you five medals in swimming,” said Galloway. For Taylor, “making the Warrior Games team is a dream come-true. I’m going to fight for it, and I plan on making it.”

Another similarity between the two Soldiers: both want to give back to the Army. Taylor plans on pursuing a degree in physical therapy. “It would be amazing to work with the military, to coach patients and tell them injury is not the end,” he said.



Galloway wants to continue on as a member of the Cadre at the WTB, helping wounded, ill and injured Soldiers and Veterans discover activities that can aid them as they recover.

“Live life tough” is more than a tattoo, more than wise words from Taylor’s grandmother. It’s about resilience and motivation. “You have to push you,” he said. “You can do anything that you want to do, just say you can do it. Don’t take no for an answer.”

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**CUTLINE:** Adaptive reconditioning sports leads to life after the military. Master Sgt. Rhoden Galloway, Warrior Transition Battalion, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, competes in cycling at the 2014 U.S. Army Warrior Trials on Sunday, June 15, 2014, at West Point, N.Y. More than 100 wounded, ill and injured service members and Veterans from across the United States are at West Point to compete in the Army Warrior Trials, June 15-19. The event is hosted by Warrior Command and includes athletes from the Army, Marines and Air Force facing off in archery, basketball, cycling, track and field, swimming, shooting, sitting volleyball and wheelchair basketball. Participants in the trials include athletes with spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, visual impairment, serious illnesses and amputations. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Eric Lieber)

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Warrior Transition Command (WTC) is a major subordinate command under the U.S. Army Medical Command (MEDCOM). WTC's mission is to develop, coordinate and integrate the Army's Warrior Care and Transition Program (WCTP) for wounded, ill and injured soldiers, veterans and their families. For more information on WTC, visit the new WTC website, [www.WTC.army.mil](http://www.WTC.army.mil), follow on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/armyWTC> or join Facebook at <http://facebook.com/armyWTC>.

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