



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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By Becky Wardwell
Warrior Transition Command

The healing power of sports

West Point, New York — Army Veteran Sgt. Sean Hook is thrilled to be a competitor at the first ever U.S. Army Warrior Trials at the United States Military Academy and hopes to make it to his third Warrior Games in September.

More than 100 wounded, ill and injured service members and Veterans from across the United States joined together at West Point to train and compete in the Army Warrior Trials, June 15-20. The event is hosted by Warrior Transition Command, and Army Warrior Trials include athletes from the Army, Marines and Air Force who will face 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.

“The first year I participated in Warrior Games, all the athletes were focused solely on the competition. Over the past two years, the games have changed and taken on greater meaning. Having the Warrior Trials this year at West Point has brought us [the athletes] closer together since we are living in the dorms. We get to share experiences, encourage the younger Soldiers and give them pointers on their techniques,” said Hook as he was getting his bow ready to shoot his first target for the day. “West Point has an excellent training facility here which has made this experience stress free and is very well organized.”

Hook was injured in Iraq in 2009 from traumatic brain injury and got into sports to help with his balance, thinking and focus. “Sports gave me goals, helped with my confidence and improved my focus. Sports alone didn’t help me in my recovery, but my family saw the positive change and the progression it brought to me.”

“I have been training for three years in discus, sitting volleyball, archery and shot put. I picked sports that I’ve never done before that had top notch coaches. I’ve already surpassed and set new goals for shot put and discus. I couldn’t have done it though without my wife who has supported me through all the time I spent training and has pushed me to keep training.”

Hook resides in South Carolina with his wife, two sons, and daughter, who have all played a huge role in his recovery and have traveled to Warrior Games to see him in action. He plays on a competitive softball league there and enjoys football, baseball and hunting. In his free time, he likes to take his wife and daughter to Bottles and Brushes, where professional artists teach people how to paint step-by-step in a fun and social environment.

Yet, Hook knows the journey is not over. “My family also had to live through the struggles I went through. I still have some good days and some bad days.” Through sporting venues like the U.S. Army Warrior Trials and the Warrior Games, Veterans like Hook can continue to grow and find strength in each other while still maintaining a competitive spirit.

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CUTLINE: Army Veteran, Sgt. Sean Hook, practices his shot at archery practice during the 2014 U.S. Army Warrior Trials at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, NY, June 12, 2014. The Warrior Trials will be held from June 15-19. The Army Warrior Trials will help determine the athletes who will represent Team Army in the 2014 Warrior Games slated for Sep. 28-Oct. 4, Colorado Springs, CO. (U.S. Photo by Pfc. Bernardus Pol)

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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, follow on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/armyWTC> or join Facebook at <http://facebook.com/armyWTC>.

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