



NEWS RELEASE

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By Benny Ontiveros
William Beaumont Army Medical Center
Public Affairs Office

Adaptive Sports Helps with Transition Back to Normal Lifestyle

West Point, NY — The military and Department of Defense recognize and provide great care for injured, ill or wounded service members. One of the supporting factors in the rehabilitation process is preparing soldiers return to civilian life and one wounded warrior is utilizing adaptive sports to transition herself back to a normal lifestyle.

Sgt. 1st Class Katie Kuiper suffered a head injury that proved to be challenging for her, but through the Army physical fitness and adaptive sports program, her goals are quickly being reached and she is competing in the 2014 U.S. Army Warrior Trials, West Point, NY.

More than 100 wounded, ill and injured service members and Veterans from the Army, Marines and Air Force have joined together to train and compete 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 Army Warrior Trials are slated for June 15-20 and are hosted by the Army Warrior Transition Command.

Kuiper is involved in three separate scheduled training events, but participated in the swimming practice recently to “relax my head injury. “

“The water is soothing and I can’t hear anything underwater which is therapeutic.” she said.

Finding ways to recover from injuries can be difficult, but Kuiper focused her energy today on swimming.

The challenging part was learning a new technique from the swimming coach. “I have great support from the coaches back home but today’s lesson was new and insightful.” she said. Swimming Coach Bobby Brewer from Cape Girardeau, Missouri, taught Katie and other service members the art of balancing the body correctly in the water.

“Most swimmers do not know that once you enter the water, the center of gravity shifts from the lower body to the upper body and they have to quickly adjust their center of mass to properly swim,” said Brewer. “This is an important lesson to learn especially for wounded warriors who suffer from upper respiratory problems.”

Kuiper and other wounded, ill and injured warriors adjusted to this new method with challenges but by the end of the practice, they swam with ease. Several swimming coaches were on hand to help Kuiper swim and provide proper swimming technique tips.

“Being here is instrumental to my well-being and by interacting with other Soldiers, it brings great joy to me and a huge smile to my face.” she said.



Cutline:

No Stroke like the side stroke

MG_0821- Sgt. 1st Class Katie Kuiper, Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas, practices the long stroke and exercises her muscles during swimming practice at Arvin Cadet Physical Development Center, West Point, New York. (U.S. Army Photo by Benny Ontiveros)

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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>.

200 Stovall Street - #7S05 - Alexandria, VA 22332