



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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By Anna Eisenberg
Warrior Transition Command

Archery helps wounded warrior heal

West Point, New York —"Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, but today is a gift. That is why it is called the 'present,'" is Spc. David Harrell's favorite "Kung Fu Panda" quote. His six year old son loves that movie, and they watch it often.

"I live one day at a time," said Harrell. "Being over in Iraq, I saw that one day to the next can change in a split second." After sustaining injuries while deployed, then suffering an unrelated stroke, Harrell is currently recovering at the Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) at Fort Belvoir, Maryland. He picked up the sport casually at first, buying his first bow off of Ebay. "I started listening to my coaches and learning," Harrell said, and decided to get more serious. Now he is hoping to make the Army's archery team in September's Warrior Games.

Harrell is a self-described "under pressure shooter." Cameras clicking, crowds shuffling behind the line only make him concentrate harder. To be a successful archer requires enormously high levels of concentration and relaxation. Harrell's pre-shot routine helps him do just that. Starting from his feet, he works his way up relaxing his body. He positions his feet perfectly on the line—even a minor misstep can throw off a shot. He brings his bow up. He draws it back. He aims. Finally he releases, following through by keeping his bow arm lifted.

"It gets better. Things heal over time," said Harrell. In fact, he attributes the skills he learned in archery to aiding in his recovery from traumatic brain injury (TBI). "Having the support of other wounded warriors or people who have gone through something similar helps a lot too," he added of his experience at the 2014 U.S. Army Warrior Trials. Harrell welcomed competition with other services competing at the Army Warrior Trials. "They're military just like I am. There's always going to be competition between the branches, but there will always be that support of each other also," he said.

While he did not leave the 2014 U.S. Army Warrior Trials a medalist, Harrell remained positive. "It's all friendly competition," he grinned, confident that he could still make the Army team at September's Warrior Games. "I will definitely take what I learned in these two weeks back home with me," he added, to prepare for September.

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CUTLINE: “It gets better. Things heal over time,” said Spc. David Harrell, Warrior Transition Unit, Fort Belvoir, VA, competing at the 2014 U.S. Army Warrior Trials in archery and shooting, West Point, NY. He attributes the skills he learned in archery to aiding his recovery from traumatic brain injury (TBI). More than 100 wounded, ill and injured service members and Veterans from the Army, Marines and Air Force met at West Point to 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. (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>.