



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Adaptive reconditioning offers Soldier new sports path

West Point, New York — After sustaining a traumatic brain injury in Afghanistan, Spc. Quintarious Almon, from Anniston, Alabama, had to choose: stay in the military or pursue his dream of playing college football. The former high school football defensive end found out he was facing an either/or situation when the Army said it would not endorse him playing college football with a TBI.

“I wanted to stay in the military, so that’s what I fought for,” said Almon, who was medevaced to the Fort Benning Warrior Transition Unit in 2010. There, he worked through giving up his college football dream and moving into the world of adaptive reconditioning.

“When I realized I couldn’t do that anymore, I kind of just gave up, but then I was like, okay, well, they have adaptive sports now, so this is new to me; I’m going to run track,” said Almon. “I could run all day if I had to... it’s something I really enjoy.”

That was one of his high school sports that he could still safely participate in, so Almon went back to training again for his old races of the 100-meter dash and the 4x 100 meter relay, adding on the 200-meter dash as well. He competed in the 2011 Warrior Games but didn’t place; in the 2013 games, though, Almon was prepared for the fast-paced competition, coming home with gold medals for the 100-meter dash and the relay, and a silver medal for the 200-meter dash.

Now, Almon is trying out once more for a spot on the Army’s Warrior Games team during the 2014 U.S. Army Warrior Trails at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, NY, June 15-19. This year, he’s trying out for the sitting volleyball team as well— a sport he enjoyed at Fort Benning but never got into competitively before.

“It’s a challenging sport. I felt like anyone could play if they tried stand up regular volleyball, but to actually sit down and play it, it’s more of a physical and mental challenge,” said Almon, a motor transport operator by trade. “To me, I like it more than stand-up; it’s more fun.”

While he said that his goal is to earn gold medals in all of his events at the Warrior Games this year, Almon also enjoys the camaraderie of the Army Warrior Trials and watching others succeed.

“I like to see people overcome their disabilities; that’s why I have the job I have now,” said Almon, who holds the civilian position of a military adaptive sports specialist at a non-profit in Alabama that offers adaptive reconditioning programs.

He got into that position after he left Fort Benning in 2011, returning to his home Reserve unit— the 287th Transportation Company in Anniston — and continuing to get care for his TBI at the Birmingham VA Medical Center.

Almon said “it’s always a great joy” to help the camp participants, who are all Veterans with post-9-11 service-connected disabilities.

“These are some of the newly injured; some of the people we get there haven’t been outside for five years. It’s kind of wonderful, what kind of people you meet,” said Almon, who is a bit of a jack-of-all-trades in his work, helping to hire coaches, serving as an instructor himself, or even acting as a mentor, encouraging disabled Veterans to reach for more independence.



He said he doesn't often tell them about his own TBI, with its lingering symptoms of headaches and memory, hearing and vision loss; he tries to go through life, including in his athletic pursuits, finding his own ways to adapt and succeed.

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CUTLINE: Spc. Quintarious Almon practices his serve during sitting volleyball practice at West Point, NY. for the 2014 U.S. Army Warrior Trials. Almon is assigned to the 287th Transportation Company and is from Anniston, AL. More than 100 Army, Marine and Air Force athletes will compete in archery, cycling, shooting, sitting volleyball, swimming, track and field and wheelchair basketball from June 15-20. The 2014 Army Warrior Trials, hosted by the U.S. Army Warrior Transition Command, help determine which Army athletes will compete at the 2014 Warrior Games slated for Sep. 28-Oct. 4, Colorado Springs, CO. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. James McCann, Combat Camera, 55th Signal Company)

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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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