



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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By Mike O'Toole
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West Point shooting coaches in awe of warrior spirit

West Point, New York —Ron Wigger coached the U.S. Military Academy rifle team to a national championship in 2005. But he was subjected to an entirely new experience during the 2014 U.S. Army Warrior Trials at West Point, N.Y.

“I didn’t know what to expect,” acknowledged Wigger. “Obviously, I knew they had disabilities, but I was just blown away by their motivation ... ‘I wish my cadets were half as motivated as you guys are.’”

“Of course my cadets are dealing with going to school, tough academics and military training, and then trying to compete in NCAA sports, but I’ve just been impressed with the overall attitude of the warriors. They totally exceeded my expectations.”

At the competition’s end, Army shooters had captured six of the overall eight gold medals. Wigger for his part found himself “totally amazed by the effort and determination of these Soldiers ... it’s been an eye-opening experience for me, and it’s something I’ll never forget.

Wigger’s assistant, Rick Johnson, found himself working with a wide range of Warrior athletes: “some have come in with a lot of competitive experience, while others are new to the sport, but from top to bottom, all of them have been right on target ... so to speak.

“The people with experience, we’re working on refining their existing techniques. With the beginners, you put them in a shooting jacket and a sling, get it adjusted right, and they start shooting top scores, which they haven’t been able to do before, and it’s great to see the smile on their faces.”

More than 100 wounded, ill and injured service members and Veterans from across the United States are at West Point competing in the Army Warrior Trials, June 15-20. The event is hosted by Warrior Transition 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 injuries, traumatic brain injuries, visual impairment, serious illnesses and amputations. Army Warrior Trials help determine who gets a spot on Team Army for the 2014 Warrior Games, Sep 28 – Oct 4, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

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CUTLINE: Ron Wigger, U.S. Military Academy rifle coach, adjusts targets during shooting competition at the U.S. Army Warrior Trails, June 16, 2014. More than 100 wounded, ill and injured service members and Veterans from across the United States are at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y. to train and compete in the Army Warrior Trials, June 15-20. The event is hosted by Warrior Transition 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 Michael O'Toole)



CUTLINE: Rick Johnson, U.S. Military Academy assistant rifle coach, offers guidance during shooting competition at U.S. Army Warrior Trails, June 16, 2014. More than 100 wounded, ill and injured service members and Veterans from across the United States are at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y. to train and compete in the Army Warrior Trials, June 15-20. The event is hosted by Warrior Transition 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 Michael O'Toole)



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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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