



Fort Carson-MEDDAC News

Warrior Transition Battalion Soldiers take aim at 2012 Warrior Games

Fort Carson's Warrior Transition Battalion has two Soldiers in the hunt to compete in the 2012 Warrior Games.

The Games are an annual competition between wounded, ill or injured members of the Armed Services.

Initially, 24 local Soldiers applied to make the Army team. The Fort Carson WTB came up with a comprehensive training program to get them ready to compete in sports like shooting, swimming, cycling, archery, sitting volleyball, wheelchair basketball and track and field events. The unit partners with LifeQuest, Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation and the United States Olympic Committee for adaptive sports training.

Sgt. 1st Class Jason Pichette, WTB cadre member, said, "It was a collaborative effort between everyone. Nurse case managers, occupational therapists....basically everyone got on board to make them competitive."

Through a series of qualifying sports clinic trials held around the nation, the Army has whittled down Fort Carson's WTB applicants to Staff Sgt. Krisell Creager-Lumpkins and Staff Sgt. Matt Bessler.

Creager-Lumpkins was inspired to try out after watching a battle buddy in last year's competition. She was recovering from injuries she sustained during training and deployment to Afghanistan.

"It was inspiring to watch the competitors. I couldn't put sentences together during my recovery. I learned I wasn't able bodied, but I wasn't dead, thank God," she enthused. "I told my friends, 'I will be here next year.'"

Bessler is healing from injuries sustained in multiple IED blasts.

"This gives me a goal. Your limitations are not a showstopper," Bessler said. "Competing is second nature to me. This is designed for healing of Soldiers and to show that life goes on."

"I put all my chips into my Army career. It's my passion. To find out you can't stay, it's heartbreaking," Creager-Lumpkins said. "The Games show that the physical and mental marry so beautifully. I have pride I didn't have before. Injuries don't define who I am but they've amplified who I am."



The WTB has allowed the original applicants to continue to train alongside Bessler and Creager-Lumpkins. Pichette said he's even had more Soldiers asking how to get involved in training.

Both Soldiers hope to qualify and compete in multiple events. The Army names its final 50 Warrior Games team competitors sometime in March.

The Games take place in Colorado Springs from April 30th to May 3rd.

For the last two years, the Marines have won the most medals and taken home the Commander's Cup.

"I'm not scared," said Creager-Lumpkins. "Not this year."