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**Wounded warriors compete in their first DoD Warrior Games**

WEST POINT, N.Y. – The 2016 Department of Defense (DoD) Warrior Games is the ultimate level of competition for more than 250 athletes competing this year here at the United States Military Academy. For some of these athletes, it is their first time competing in a Paralympic-style competition.

“It feels amazing,” said Marine Corps Veteran Lance Cpl. Dakota “Cody” Boyer. “Most of us know where each other is coming from, so we cheer each other on and support each other, no matter what.” Boyer, 21, a native of Flint, Michigan, is assigned to the Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Battalion-West, Camp Pendleton, California. He will be competing in sitting volleyball and swimming at this adaptive sports competition.

“I just want to compete and have fun, and continue to work hard [on my rehabilitation] to, hopefully someday, go back to the Corps,” Boyer added. “We [Marines] are the best of the best!”

The DoD Warrior Games highlight the resiliency and warrior spirit of service members, veterans and their families and caregivers. Adaptive sports and athletic reconditioning activities play a fundamental role in the successful recovery and reintegration of our service members and veterans. This year’s DoD Warrior Games includes athletes from the U.S. and United Kingdom Armed Forces and are being held at the United States Military Academy, West Point from June 15-21.

“I want so much to be here. Just pick a lane and let me swim!” said Army Veteran Staff Sgt. Matthew Lammers, in an interview with the Warrior Transition Command. Lammers is here competing in his first Warrior Games. A native of Olathe, Kansas, he was injured in June of 2007, while on a routine patrol in Baghdad, Iraq, when his Humvee took a direct hit from an improvised explosive device. He started swimming as part of his therapy, and he discovered how the low-impact, buoyant qualities of water turned out to be quite liberating.



“Swimming allows me to regain a sense of independence, and frees me from reliance upon a wheelchair,” he explained.

Beyond the physical disabilities of some of the athletes, there are those with visual impairment, or VI, as well. Navy Veteran Airman Brittany Jordan, 27, of Mobile, Alabama, is one of the VI athletes competing in their first Warrior Games. She will be competing in archery, shotput, discus and tandem cycling.

“Most of the sports I picked, I’d never done before,” Jordan said. “But everyone’s been telling me, ‘you can do this’ and you know what? Yes, I can do this!”

Jordan is part of the Navy Wounded Warrior-Safe Harbor Adaptive Sports and Recreation Program, delivering year-round competitive and recreation opportunities for wounded, ill or seriously injured sailors and Coast Guardsmen. Her motivation for the games came from her teammates and her family, especially her sister.

“After I was injured, I was saying to myself, ‘I can’t do this, I can’t do nothing!’ My sister pushed me to get out there and get involved,” Jordan explained. “That’s when I decided I wanted to get out there and inspire others and show them that you can do stuff, even though you’re visually impaired.”

With the spirit of the competition, the comradery with their fellow wounded warriors and the chance to inspire others to go beyond their disabilities, these athletes are here to compete, but mostly, to have fun while competing.

“I’m having a blast! This is so much fun!” Jordan exclaimed. “I just want to do my best and show people that I can do this. I would ‘love, love, love’ to come back next year, maybe compete at a future Invictus Games, maybe even the Paralympics.”