



**Point of Contact:**

Warrior Games Joint Task Force [DoDWGPublicAffairs@mail.mil](mailto:DoDWGPublicAffairs@mail.mil)

**For Immediate Release: June 17, 2016**

**Warrior Games brings Olympic-caliber talent to the swimming competition**

WEST POINT, N.Y. – The 2016 Department of Defense (DoD) Warrior Games is bringing Olympic gold to the wounded warrior swimming competition with appearances by U.S. Paralympic silver medalist Pam Danberg, NBC Olympic swimming commentator and U.S. Olympic gold medalist Rowdy Gaines, 4-time U.S. Olympic gold medalist Lenny Krayzelburg and International Swimming Hall of Fame Executive Director Bruce Wigo.

The swimming competition will be held on Monday, June 20, at the Arvin Cadet Physical Development Center at the United States Military Academy at West Point. For both the athletes and the special guests this is a chance to be inspired by heroes, both in and out of the pool.

“I’ve coached these guys in the past and it’s just truly amazing to watch them compete,” said Bobby Brewer, Warrior Games Swimming Venue Manager. “Rowdy said to me personally that he can’t wait to be here to be inspired by these dedicated athletes.”

The DoD Warrior Games is an adaptive sports competition for wounded, ill and injured service members and veterans. Approximately 250 athletes will participate in eight sporting events, representing teams from the Army, Marine Corps, Navy/Coast Guard, Air Force, U.S. Special Operations Command and United Kingdom Armed Forces. The DoD Warrior Games highlight the resiliency and warrior spirit of service members, veterans and their families and caregivers.

“I want swimming to not just be a competition, but a forum for families and spectators to learn about the sport and the athletes,” Brewer explained. “To have Rowdy and Lenny, Pam and Bruce here to educate us is a really big deal.”

The swimming competition includes the 50-yard freestyle, 100-yard freestyle, 50-yard backstroke, 50-yard breaststroke and 200-yard freestyle relays in both men’s and women’s categories and a mixed gender/classification for the 200-yard freestyle relays. Athletes compete in different classification categories based on functional abilities, including impaired muscle power/range of movement, limb deficiency and visual impairment.



“It’s not just about swimming, it’s swimming with that adaptation,” Brewer concluded. “They’re not just competing, they’re giving it their all. I hope that the people watching it will understand that accomplishment.”

Pam Danberg received a silver medal in the 50-meter breaststroke at the 1988 Paralympic Games in Seoul, South Korea. She spent more than 20 years involved in sports administration, having served as an assistant swimming coach at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., President of the Dwarf Athletic Association from 1995 to 2005, and Chef de Mission for the 2000 Summer Paralympic Games and 2002 Winter Paralympic Games.

Rowdy Gaines is a U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame member, three-time Olympic gold medalist, and member of the International Swimming Hall of Fame. He is currently the chief fundraiser for USA Swimming as well as a swimming analyst for ESPN and NBC television networks. At the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, Calif., he won a gold medal in the 100-meter freestyle and swam the anchor leg for both the gold medal-winning U.S. teams in the 4×100-meter freestyle relay and 4×100-meter medley relay.

Born in the Ukraine, Lenny Krayzelburg immigrated to the United States with his family in 1989. After a successful college swimming career at the University of Southern California, he became the first swimmer since 1986 to sweep the backstroke events, 100-meter and 200-meter, at the World Championships. He won four gold medals at the 2000 and 2004 Olympic Games, breaking world records and Olympic records in the backstroke.

Bruce Wigo is in his 11<sup>th</sup> year as President and CEO of the International Swimming Hall of Fame in Santa Clara, Calif. Wigo is a well-established historian and author in the aquatics world and has written extensively on the history of swimming, the development of swimming from an indigenous life skill to a sport, and diversity and racial discrimination in aquatics. He is currently working on a book documenting the history and importance of swimming in the military—from ancient to modern times—not only in combat, but as therapy for wounded warriors.

Spectators are encouraged to attend and cheer on the athletes as they compete throughout the DoD Warrior Games, beginning at 8 a.m. on June 15 and concluding on June 21. For more information on attending, volunteering, covering or participating, please visit <http://warriorgames.dodlive.mil> or follow the Games on Facebook at <https://facebook.com/warriorgames>.