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ARMY TOUGH

“This event gives you the feeling that you still belong to something,” says former National Guard Staff Sgt. Michael Kacer (competing in shot put for the Army team), injured in a rocket attack in Afghanistan.

“The competition is intense, but we’re all in a constant state of cheering everyone on.”

INJURIES
FADE AWAY
AND
TEAMWORK
RULES AT
THE
ANNUAL
**WARRIOR
GAMES,**
WHERE
WOUNDED
MILITARY
MEMBERS
SHOW
OFF THEIR
TRUE GRIT

Strength & Glory

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WTC
U.S. ARMY
WARRIOR TRANSITION COMMAND

For Marine Cpl. Kionte Storey, the Warrior Games are about more than proving he is still an athlete despite losing his leg to an IED in Afghanistan. After leaving his unit he missed being part of a team. “You never quite get that camaraderie back,” says Storey, 24. “But these games were pretty close.” Begun in 2010 by the military and the U.S. Olympic Committee, the event (held May 1 to 5 in Colorado Springs) gives injured soldiers a chance for friendly competition and, says Air Force Sgt. Israel Del Toro, “to talk smack.” Del Toro remains on active duty after being burned over 80 percent of his body by a roadside bomb. All that falls away when he is competing: “You’re focusing on throwing the shot put instead of what happened to you.”

STILL IN THE GAME

“My first sport activity was a year after the accident,” says former Marine Cpl. Travis Greene (center, during a floor volleyball game). “It was a huge confidence booster.”



WHEELED WARRIORS

After losing their legs to IEDs in Afghanistan, Marine corporals (from left, in the 1,500 meter) Justin Gaertner and Anthony McDaniel have become formidable wheelchair racers. “Competing is just a natural thing for me,” says McDaniel. “No one can take that from me.” Adds Gaertner: “I’ve done more without legs than I ever did with legs.”

MOVING FORWARD

“I’ve never felt sorry for myself,” says Kionte Storey (running the 100 meter). “I just keep pushing myself and trying to improve. Athletics and competition help me do that.”



MASTERS OF THE COURT

Members of the Army team—veterans (from left) Spc. Damion Peyton, Cpl. Perry Price, Spc. Randall McMinn and Spc. Anthony Pone—are all grins after their victory over the Marines. Wheelchair basketball “took some getting used to. It took me a while to get my shot,” says McMinn. “Also you can take two pushes [of the chair] before you have to dribble.” Otherwise it is traveling, “same as in stand-up ball.”