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Corporal Sean Barry

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Air Force Reserves in 1999 as a Motor Transport Driver. I transferred to the regular Air Force and was posted to Townsville in 2002 before posting to Tindal.

In 2016 I deployed to the Middle East as part of Operation Okra.

My career highlights include working with the Classic Hornets and retiring them out of service at 75 Squadron.

I am currently posted to the School of Technical Training in Wagga Wagga.

Other information: My nickname is 'Gunnie' or 'Baz'. I am married with 2 children - Jack (12) and Abby (10).

Age: 44

Hometown: Townsville, Queensland

Current town: Wagga Wagga, New South Wales

Competing in: Archery, shooting and wheelchair rugby

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have a back injury.

Sport background: I have competed in shooting in multiple disciplines including single action (cowboy), combined service rifle and sporting clays.

I am in the Australian Bowhunters Association and do field archery with Wagga Wagga Field Archers.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? I didn't start archery to assist with my rehabilitation but, once I started, the drive for improvement led to goal setting which overlapped with rehabilitation. The inclusiveness of the local club has been fantastic. I started with my son and the club is really trying to build from grass roots. The sport requires a high degree of relaxation and repetitiveness to achieve the shot, so you need to clear the mind and hold the bow and focus on the target. This skill is great in mindfulness and can be utilised in high stress environments.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? Grateful I have been given such an opportunity.

What is your greatest achievement to date? My successful marriage and kids.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? To assist with my recovery by having something to prepare for and work towards.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? Attending is a win, as is doing the best I can in sports and promoting sports as a mechanism to assist with rehabilitation.

Who is supporting you at the Games? My wife and kids will be attending, and my extended family will be watching from home. Hopefully plenty of others with injuries or illnesses will watch, which might encourage others to get involved in some form of sport.

Damien Batty

ADF service: I served in the Australian Army from 15 January 1996 to 1 December 2021 in Army Health Services. I deployed to Bougainville in 1999, Solomon Islands in 2009, Afghanistan in 2012 and supported Operation COVID-19 Assist in 2021. I served as part of the Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program in remote Northern Territory and far north Queensland.

Other information: I am now retired, enjoy driving the John Deere tractor and volunteering in the Macleay Valley community where I can. I am married to my wife, Carly, and we have a daughter, Eva (10). I also have 3 older children, Emma (24), William (20) and Camron (15), who all reside in Adelaide.

Age: 50

Hometown: Kempsey, New South Wales

Current town: Kempsey, New South Wales

Competing in: Archery, sitting volleyball, swimming and wheelchair rugby

What is the nature of your injury or illness? Multiple lower limb injuries and conditions, chronic lower back pain, significant hearing loss, post-traumatic stress and anxiety, all related to my service.

Sport background: I enjoyed a wide range of sports growing up, including rugby league, union, cricket, surfing, swimming and snowboarding. My greatest sporting moment was representing Australia against New Zealand in the inaugural ANZAC Day test for the Victorian Masters Rugby League. I picked up a try during the low-scoring match. I had to finish active team participation due to my medical conditions, however I was honoured to train the South Sydney Rabbitohs Women's squad in 2020, followed by the ADF Women's Rugby League team and the Cronulla Caringbah Sharks for the Sydney Shield.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Adaptive sport plays a vital role in my recovery and rehabilitation. Teamwork connects me with the community. It improves my mental and physical health and motivates me to focus on what I can do, not what I no longer can do. My wife, Carly, is my swimming coach, so it has also galvanised our relationship through her encouragement and our combined commitment to always striving to improve my performance.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? I was thrilled and honoured to be selected amongst a team of so many inspirational competitors.

What is your greatest achievement to date? I'm still alive past 50!

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? I was blessed to be asked by one of my closest mates to support him at Invictus Games Düsseldorf 2023 in Germany. Being amongst Craig and other competitors inspired me to apply. I was also encouraged by the archery coach to take a positive outlook on opportunities through adaptive sports.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? Winning to me is not only getting there to represent our country, but also to achieve my personal best. It's not about medals, even though I am highly competitive, but to be the best teammate I can be, which is of the highest importance to me.

Who is supporting you at the Games? Carly and Eva will be cheering on from home. My US 'battle buddy', Tori, a retired Army nursing officer, will make the trip from Colorado with her sister, Elizabeth, to be honorary Aussies as part of our friends and family contingent.

Cooper Blackwood

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Navy in May 2018 as a Boatswain's Mate, which ensures the smooth day-to-day security, safety, maintenance and operations of ships. I deployed as part of the Indo-Pacific Endeavour in 2019. I am currently posted to HMAS Kuttabul in Port Services. I was medically discharged in May 2024.

Hometown: Rockhampton, Queensland

Current town: Eastgardens, Sydney, New South Wales

Competing in: Athletics, indoor rowing, swimming, wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I dived into a pool, hit my head on the bottom and instantly fractured and dislocated my C5-C6 vertebra, immediately paralysing myself from my chest down, including my hands and part of my arms. This resulted in a bad spinal cord injury and becoming an incomplete quadriplegic.

Sport background: I grew up playing many sports including touch football, soccer, futsal and golf, but my main sport was swimming where I competed at a national level. Since competing at Invictus Games Düsseldorf 2023, I play wheelchair rugby once a week.

My greatest moment was receiving a bronze medal at Invictus Games Düsseldorf 2023 in wheelchair rugby. I loved being part of such a great team of different individuals from different walks of life, who all came together as a team. Sharing that moment with each other will forever be in my memory as such a great achievement I'll never forget.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport has played a massive role in my rehabilitation. I absolutely love any code of sport. Even when I was bed bound, not able to sit up, I could keep my mind busy watching sport on TV in hospital. My biggest goal throughout my entire rehabilitation program was to get back to playing golf again as I had a brand-new set of golf irons still in their box that I got for Christmas the same year I broke my neck.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team?

There was a bunch of mixed emotions when I received the email to say I had made the team, but the main ones being a mixture of joy, happiness and motivation. Also a great sense of relief after spending a lot of the day refreshing my inbox awaiting the verdict. I also felt for the competitors that didn't get selected as everyone at the trials were great people and I felt like they all deserved a spot.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Hard to narrow down to one so here are 3. Overcoming all previous doctors' assumptions and being able to not only walk, but also able to somewhat run again, beating my mates in a round of golf one year post my accident and overcoming my fears and taking on the challenge of swimming at Invictus Games Düsseldorf 2023 with a lot of success.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? I applied for the Warrior Games because I've seen first-hand how amazing the Adaptive Sports Program is and what it's done for so many people over the years. Personally, I thought it would be a great opportunity to challenge myself further within sport and during my rehabilitation, while spreading positivity and supporting others as a previous competitor and helping play my part in a leadership role.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? Winning for me at these Games is being able to go away and compete in a competitive environment once again; being able to connect with other nations from around the world, making new friends along the way, supporting and encouraging my fellow teammates with no expectations. Making the team is already a win in my eyes, so my next goal is to compete at the best of my ability and just enjoy the experience and everything it has to offer.

Who is supporting you at the Games? I will not have any friends and family travelling with me to watch the Games, however if it is livestreamed, I will have a bunch of my friends and family watching and supporting me from back home.

Erin Brigden

ADF service: I joined the Australian Army in October 2014 as a Fitter Armourer and medically discharged in early 2023.

Other information: Mum to my 2 children, Phoenix and Mia, 2 kelpies, Diesel and Pearl, and wife to husband, Ryan.

Age: 29

Hometown: Shellharbour, New South Wales

Current town: Brisbane, Queensland

Competing in: Athletics, indoor rowing, powerlifting, and swimming

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have a ligament tear and degeneration in my left wrist, Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) in both hands and mental health issues.

Sport background: I competed in swimming at high school and tried other sports such as touch footy, rugby league and karate. The last 10 years have been mostly spent weight training, leisure swimming and horse riding. My greatest sporting moment was making lifetime personal bests in swimming and powerlifting at Invictus Games Düsseldorf 2023.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport has always, and will always, be an integral part of my rehabilitation as it aids tremendously in the management of my mental health and keeps me active, despite degenerative issues. It provides a platform to set goals, challenge myself, relate to other adults and find a sense of belonging. Sport played a key role when I discharged from the Army. I wholeheartedly believe my participation in the Adaptive Sports Program made the world of difference when I transitioned back into civilian life. I was able to find positive distraction, look forward to the next big thing and focus on what I could still do well, rather than dwell on what I felt I was missing out on or where I felt I had failed.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? Ecstatic; very honoured to be a returning competitor and to get the opportunity to continue my journey with the Adaptive Sports Program.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Being the mum I wanted to be to my 2 kids, and surpassing personal bests set in my youth before illness and injury.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? Being a part of Team Australia at Invictus Games Düsseldorf 2023 was one of the most incredible experiences of my life. I hoped my experience could extend to the Warrior Games as I wanted the opportunity to compete in a different atmosphere and event. I wanted the chance to set higher goals for myself, try some new sports I've never done before and connect with and support a new group of veterans on their own journeys.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? Returning as a competitor is already a huge win, but success at the Warrior Games this time round will be getting the most out of the experience - being present, immersing myself in the atmosphere, meeting veterans from other countries, cheering on my teammates and surpassing my personal goals.

Who is supporting you at the Games? Many of my family and friends will be cheering me on from back in Australia. I will also have some family and friends join me at the Warrior Games.

Petty Officer Justin Brown

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Navy in August 1995 as a Boatswain's Mate. In June 2004 I transferred to become an Imagery Specialist (photographer). In January 2013 I deployed to Afghanistan as part of Operation Slipper. The highlight of my career has been attending ANZAC Day in France as a photographer and working on the search for Malaysian Airlines MH370.

I am currently posted to Navy Imagery Unit East as the Imagery Operations Manager.

Other information: I have a wife, Gail, and together we have 2 sons, Samuel (17) and Bennet (14).

Age: 49

Hometown: Sanctuary Point, South Coast, New South Wales

Current town: Sanctuary Point, South Coast, New South Wales

Competing in: Archery, indoor rowing, shooting and sitting volleyball

What is the nature of your injury or illness? Major depression and anxiety.

Sport background: Growing up I played a few team sports but never really succeeded. I concentrated on outdoor activities including surfing and other watersports. As an adult I have been doing more individual activities, including kiteboarding, stand up paddle boarding, snow skiing and archery.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport has provided a relief mechanism to allow me to forget about all the problems I am having. It also allows me to reset.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? I was excited but also nervous.

What is your greatest achievement to date? My family.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? It was a spur of the moment decision. I wanted to meet more serving and ex-serving personnel that were undergoing their own challenges.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? By going to the Games and making new friends I have already won. It's not about putting a medal around your neck; it's about the effort applied and the new friendships made.

Who is supporting you at the Games? My family will be cheering me on from home.

Jake Christie

ADF service: I joined the Australian Army in February 2015 as an Infantryman and posted to 7RAR. I medically discharged in February 2021.

Other information: I am currently studying and working part-time as a surveyor. I have a beautiful wife, Lauren, and baby daughter, Halle.

Age: 29

Hometown: Sunshine Coast, Queensland

Current town: Sunshine Coast, Queensland

Competing in: Athletics, indoor rowing, powerlifting, swimming, and wheelchair basketball

What is the nature of your injury or illness? During my service I had bilateral shoulder reconstructions. A couple of years after leaving the military I had a right total hip replacement and left hip arthroscopy. I'm also managing chronic back and neck pain.

Sport background: I have played rugby league my whole life, as well as a bit of oztag and touch footy. During my service, I was fortunate to play rugby league for both the Army and ADF. I played in the Sergeant Matthew Locke MG Charity Event in Bellingen twice and played in curtain-raisers for NRL games on ANZAC Day in 2018 and 2019, against the New Zealand Defence Force. I played rugby league with the ADF in Papua New Guinea against one of their representative teams. Now, I enjoy lifting weights in the gym and playing touch rugby league.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport has always been a massive part of my life. I struggled a lot while recovering from surgeries and not being able to play sport. I have worked extremely hard on my rehabilitation in the gym, with the goal to be able to run around and play sport again.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? I was absolutely stoked! I'm honoured to be a part of the team with such a great bunch of competitors and staff.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Returning to sport after 2 hip surgeries last year, getting married and becoming a father.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? I have missed competing on the football field. I wanted the chance to be competitive, to feel like an athlete again, and to be part of a team.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? Winning for me isn't about medals. Winning will be getting myself in the best shape possible - physically and mentally - before the Games. If I can do that, the results will take care of themselves.

Who is supporting you at the Games? My wife and daughter, as well as my parents, Sherry and Gary, will be coming to support me at the Games. The rest of my family, plenty of friends and even a couple of people I've met at the gym will be watching from home.

Chelsie Clayton

ADF service: I joined the Army in August 2017 as a Medic and also worked in Operator Movements. I did a lot of work with COVID-19 Assist, Bushfire Assist and other multiple natural disasters. I discharged in November 2022.

Other information: I am a nurse at St Vincent Hospital in Brisbane. My family calls me 'Chookie'. My close family includes my mother, Michele, my father, Nathan, and younger sister, Billie May.

Age: 27

Hometown: Brisbane, Queensland

Current town: Brisbane, Queensland

Competing in: Athletics, indoor rowing, sitting volleyball, and swimming

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have multiple mental health conditions and a left shoulder injury.

Sport background: I grew up doing a lot of swimming; 10 times a week for many years. I first started competing in swimming in 2006 when I was in primary school and didn't stop competing till 2015. I also did surf life saving, soccer and rowing in high school.

I swim for fitness now and play water polo, and occasionally compete.

My greatest sporting moment is winning my first individual medal in swimming when I was 8 years old.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Swimming helps clear my mind and is easy on my body. I've always loved sports, so being able to compete and train again has really helped my rehabilitation.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? I was very excited to have the opportunity to compete again, especially for the Australian Defence Force. I am quite nervous to compete in the individual event but know I have an excellent support network behind me.

What is your greatest achievement to date? My achievements are related to sports, my service, the friends I have made, and making my family proud.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? I was informed about the program by my doctor when I was discharging and he recommended it to me because he knew how important sport is to me.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? I would love to bring home a medal from the Games but being there with my family and watching my teammates compete will be the best part.

Who is supporting you at the Games? My mother and father, Michele and Nathan, will be coming with me to the Games.

Nigel Coutts

ADF service: I joined the Army in May 1995 as part of the Royal Australian Infantry Corps and was posted to 4th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment for 8 years. I transferred to the Special Air Service Regiment in 2003 and served there for 17 years.

I did multiple deployments overseas, including Iraq, Afghanistan and East Timor.

I discharged in September 2020 with 25 years' service under my belt.

Other information: I am retired and volunteer at 'Connected By' helping veterans and first responders. My father is a Vietnam veteran and my grandfather was a pilot flying Spitfires in World War II.

Age: 48

Hometown: Palmerston North, New Zealand

Current town: Perth, Western Australia

Competing in: Ultimate Champion. To earn the Ultimate Champion title, participants compete in their respective classifications in eight sporting events. The Ultimate Champion is the competitor who earns the most points in the eight events.

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have multiple injuries from head to toe. I was involved in 2 Improvised Explosive Devices in Afghanistan, so there are about 21 chapters to my story. I have injuries to my head, ribs, pelvis, spine and legs, and have many steel implants and pins throughout my body.

Sport background: I grew up playing rugby union, basketball, rugby league, cycling, swimming, snowboarding and surfing. I don't compete anymore due to my physical injuries.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport has been, and continues to be, a big part of my rehabilitation. This will be ongoing and I know it will help in the long term as I grow and continue in life.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team?
Stoked! I was over the moon.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Being selected for the Special Air Service Regiment (SASR) and being able to help vulnerable people who couldn't fight for themselves. I tried to make this a better world in which to live.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? After talking to other people who had been involved in the Adaptive Sports Program, I thought it would be a good thing to try. Once you try wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby, you are hooked.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? Friendship, camaraderie, teamwork, blood, sweat, tears and competing for Australia with a lot of fun times.

Who is supporting you at the Games? My wife and 2 daughters will be joining me in Orlando.

Leading Seaman Harley Dodds

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Navy in November 2014 as a Marine Technician. Since joining I have obtained my Certificate IV Engineering (Diesel Fitter). During my service I have completed 4 postings on HMAS Canberra in the Marine Engineering department and deployed on several major exercises, including Rim of the Pacific Exercise (2016 and 2022), Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2019 and Operation Bushfire Assist 2019 to 2020.

Age: 26

Hometown: Sunshine Coast, Queensland

Current town: Cronulla, New South Wales

Competing in: Athletics, indoor rowing, powerlifting, and wheelchair rugby

What is the nature of your injury or illness? In 2022, while playing for the Navy Tridents rugby league team, I was tackled and someone's full weight landed on my left ankle resulting in a fracture of the fibula and a complete rupture of some ligaments. As a result, I had ankle surgery and have a permanent ligament tear and osteoarthritis in my left knee.

Sport background: Since a young age I have loved all kinds of sports. I played rugby league since I was 7 until my ankle injury in 2022. I've raced off-road motorbikes since I was 4 and played several other sports growing up, including short track athletics, cricket, soccer, surfing and skateboarding. I love the challenge of sport and the team environment it brings so I have enjoyed trying my hand at different activities.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sports and athletics have played a major role in my rehabilitation. After my surgeries I was not able to exercise for a long period of time, so getting back into my love for sport and physical activity has been vital to regain my confidence and ability in my knee and ankle.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? I was ecstatic! It was a big goal of mine to make the team and represent Australia in the Warrior Games, so it filled me with joy and excitement when I received the news.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Hard to name a singular event so here are 3 memorable achievements:

- Losing 35 kilograms over the past 12 months after gaining a substantial amount of weight following my ankle surgery
- Representing the Australian Navy rugby league team and playing at ANZ Stadium
- Racing in the Australian Junior titles for off-road motocross.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? I applied for Warrior Games because I got to see firsthand, through 2 of my work colleagues, how amazing the Adaptive Sports Program and Invictus Games Düsseldorf 2023 was for them. I also saw it as a great opportunity for me to challenge and push myself in my rehabilitation, and to be within a team environment again.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? For me personally, I have already won by being selected to represent Australia and travel to the Warrior Games. Being in a competitive environment again, with the support and encouragement of likeminded individuals through connection with other nations, and enjoying my overall experience, is the ultimate win for me.

Who is supporting you at the Games? I will have my mother and father travelling to Orlando to support me at the Games. If the Warrior Games are livestreamed, I will also have some family and friends back home cheering and supporting me.

David Galla

ADF service: I joined the Army in 2009 as a Rifleman in the Royal Australian Infantry. I discharged in 2013.

Other information: I am a carpenter. My partner and I have a son who is 7, twin daughters who are 4 and a newborn.

Age: 40

Hometown: Terrigal, New South Wales

Current town: Berkeley Vale, New South Wales

Competing in: Athletics, indoor rowing, and powerlifting

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have injuries to both my knees, right shoulder, lower back and mental health.

Sport background: I played rugby league and did tae wan do, kick boxing and athletics growing up.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Getting back into the gym has got me moving again and helped me build strength following my injuries. Being active again has changed my life and given me something to work towards. I feel like my life has changed dramatically from getting back into sport and would encourage others who are in similar positions to do the same.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? It was unbelievable, I don't think it's really hit me. It feels surreal.

What is your greatest achievement to date? My family, nothing beats that.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? I went back to footy and I needed something else to work towards and challenge myself in. I knew it would put me out of my comfort zone. I have adopted a mentality of moving forward and it gives me a way to move forward with my rehabilitation.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? Making my kids proud, whether I win or lose. My son is really interested in the Games and has been asking questions and telling others about how proud he is of his dad.

Who is supporting you at the Games? My family will be cheering me on from Australia along with my rehabilitation team. They have all been an important part of my journey and I am grateful to everyone for their ongoing support.

Captain Doug Griffiths

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Naval Reserve in 1988 as a sailor before joining the regular Navy as a Seaman Officer in 1989. I graduated from the Australian Defence Force Academy in 1991. My early career was spent at sea as an Officer of the Watch in a variety of ships. I qualified as a Mine Warfare and Clearance Diving Officer in 1995 and served in Clearance Diving roles.

My service took me across the world, including United Kingdom, Malaysia and Jordan. I completed operational deployments to the Southern Ocean in 1997, the Northern Arabian Gulf in 2001, Iraq in 2006, Afghanistan in 2009, Solomon Islands in 2013 and Afghanistan in 2016.

Other information: I don't really have a nickname, but most people call me Dougie. I have been married to my wife, Emma, a serving naval officer for 32 years, and we have a son, Josh, who is also a serving naval officer.

Age: 53

Hometown: Don't really have one, as my family were in the Air Force and moved around too much to really call anywhere home.

Current town: Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Competing in: Athletics, cycling, indoor rowing, sitting volleyball and swimming

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I was diagnosed with Lymphoplasmacytic Lymphoma in February 2023, a rare non-Hodgkin lymphoma variant. I have had 7 months of chemotherapy, spent 6 weeks in hospital, had 8 blood transfusions and 2 surgeries. I am not in remission, and I know I will get sick again and require further treatment.

Sport background: I have been actively involved in triathlons since 1986. I have completed 14 Ironman distance races and been privileged to represent Australia at the World Age Group Long Course Triathlon World Championships in Sweden in 2004 and Denmark in 2005.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport offers me the opportunity to regain some normality in my life. Cancer turned my life upside down. My cancer journey is far from over. It is not going away, but being able to use sport to build my confidence and fitness to combat cancer and help my mental health has been transformational. I will never again be as fast or as fit as I once was, and that's ok. Everything I achieve now will be a post cancer personal best and sport gives me the motivation to get up and keep going when life seems to be at its lowest and darkest.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? Honestly, it was pretty emotional. I never thought I would again get an opportunity like this to serve alongside my Defence family. The people I met at the trials were

simply amazing. I really wanted to see them all again, be part of their journeys and be part of a team that will proudly represent the ADF and Australia.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Being a dad.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? I am not ready to give up. I am not ready to let cancer define who I am, and I am not going to let cancer win. I have been a member of the ADF for nearly 36 years; it is my life. I am worried my cancer will take this from me. Warrior Games lets me stay engaged and allows me to prove I can still do the things I love. It allows me to be part of a journey with others that is inspirational and life changing in so many ways.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? Having the courage and the physical ability to turn up and start, and to do my best.

Who is supporting you at the Games? My wife, Emma, will be coming across to Orlando.

Lieutenant Commander Alex Hale

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Navy in 2002, with aspirations for a career in aviation, which evolved into the Aeronautical Engineering stream. My career highlights include representing the Navy in the United States to conduct training and introduction of the MH-60R 'Romeo' Seahawk helicopter, deploying to the Middle East, and receiving a bronze commendation as a career manager for engineers. Although unexpectedly shortened by my injury, my greatest accomplishment was the selection and posting as the Aviation Engineering Officer of 816 Squadron.

Other information: I married my wonderful wife, Erin, in 2012 and we have a 6-year-old son, Maxwell.

I will medically transition from the Navy in July 2024 and plan to spend time with my family while undertaking further rehabilitation and recovery for my injury.

Age: 41

Hometown: Lake Macquarie, New South Wales

Current town: Lake Macquarie, New South Wales

Competing in: Archery, cycling, indoor rowing, shooting and wheelchair basketball

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I am a paraplegic as a result of a spinal cord injury. In late April 2023, I was hit from behind while cycling on the South Coast of NSW, by a ute travelling at about 100 km/h. The ute driver had fallen asleep at the wheel and drifted off the road into the bike lane. I was airlifted to Royal North Shore Hospital and treated for multiple spinal cord injuries, rendering me paralysed from below the chest. I had collarbone and rib fractures, collapsed lungs and multiple grazes. I spent around 10 weeks in hospital and a further 12 weeks in rehabilitation.

Sport background: Growing up I mostly played soccer, rode my bike and did a bit of sailing in high school. After joining the Navy, I played soccer and mixed netball for the Australian Defence Force Academy but, after getting my degree, I mostly dabbled with running and mountain biking.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Before my injury, fitness was crucial for my mental and physical wellbeing in managing day-to-day life. As part of my rehabilitation, fitness forms a fundamental component of my recovery to build strength and stamina as a wheelchair user and overcome the physical and mental obstacles of my injury.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? I felt equal parts of joy and anxiousness. I am extremely happy to have been selected and have the opportunity to play sport with a lot of new people who share a Defence background but also their own rehabilitation journey. I have some trepidation of competing at the Games and travelling overseas, however I am heartened to know

this endeavour is specifically designed to assist me in overcoming these obstacles and complement my rehabilitation journey.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Without a doubt, my selection for the Warrior Games is up there, considering I am still in the early stages of my recovery journey. Also up there is my relatively fast journey through hospital and rehabilitation, which I can attribute to the strong support of my wife, family and friends, but also my mental resilience and positive outlook on life.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? I was invited to visit an ADF Adaptive Sports Training Camp in mid-2023, where competitors were preparing for Invictus Games Düsseldorf 2023. At the camp, I was introduced to several competitors and former competitors, staff and support personnel. Everyone was so supportive and encouraging, and I witnessed the camaraderie and mutual support offered under the umbrella of sport and fitness. My conversations with people there nurtured my determination to apply for the next Games to learn and participate in adaptive sports and potentially travel overseas in a safe and supported environment.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? To get overseas, participate in some adaptive sports and share the experience with my family and new friends.

Who is supporting you at the Games? My wife, Erin, and son, Max, are leading my cheer squad, supported by a large contingent of my family also coming to the Games. I am also anticipating strong support from family and friends, including Navy and the Fleet Air Arm, who will watch the Games from home and work.

Ainsley Hooker

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Corps of Transport in the Australian Army in 2007 as a driver. I was medically discharged in 2013.

Other information: I am a mother to 2 amazing children, Luke (13) and Isabelle (6). I am a wife to my wonderful, supportive and encouraging husband, Jayson. We met in Albury-Wodonga in the holding platoon and have been happily married for 15 years.

Age: 37

Hometown: Brisbane, Queensland

Current town: Giru, Queensland

Competing in: Athletics, archery, sitting volleyball, wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby

What is the nature of your injury or illness? In 2007 I sustained a bad ankle injury. Following failed surgeries, I was left with chronic pain and a dying twisted foot and ankle for 13 years and ultimately became a below-knee amputee.

Sports background: From a young age I played a range of team and individual sports with the help, guidance and encouragement of my father. I joined soccer and surf lifesaving when I was 8 and stayed until I joined the military. During primary and high school, I did everything, including swimming, cross country, athletics, touch football and soccer, which often meant travelling around to play different teams.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport is my love, but for many years I sat at home and could not move. The choice to become an amputee was hard and took a lot out of me physically and mentally. Being involved in wheelchair rugby has been amazing. The joy and happiness from meeting new people, competing and training has shown me there is light at the end and has brought me out of the dark and back into the light. I feel alive again and have a new drive to push myself further.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? To be surrounded by serving and ex-serving men and women; the feeling of acceptance and understanding that no civilian person will understand. The thought of being in another country wearing green and gold and being surrounded by others going through the same hardship. Finding each other through stories and laughter. I felt like it would be a life-changing experience to be able to travel to the US and meet and compete against other military members from around the world.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? I was excited and proud to be selected as part of the team and to be given this amazing opportunity to represent my country.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? Winning to me at the Games is wearing green and gold to support others from Team Australia. Showing my kids and others out there that missing a limb or struggling with mental health cannot stop you. Proving I am a winner.

Who is supporting you at the Games? My husband, Jayson, will be joining me at the Games. I look forward to showing him my passion, motivation and resilience, and how I have improved in life so much, and that I can do this. My beautiful kids will be at home watching me with Nana on TV.

Adam Jackson

ADF service: I joined the Army in 2006 as an Avionics Technician, which meant I maintained the electrical systems on helicopters. This awesome job saw me work on Blackhawks, MRH90 Taipan helicopters and Chinooks. I deployed to Afghanistan twice, and serving my country alongside other nations at Kandahar Airfield was the highlight of my career. I was posted to Perth with Defence Force Recruiting, which gave me the privilege of engaging with school students, parents and others to share why working in Defence is a rewarding job.

Other information: My wife, Kate, and 2 children, Maddy and Layla, have spent countless hours looking after me. My family are my ultimate supporters.

Age: 43

Hometown: Toowoomba, Queensland

Current town: Sunshine Coast, Queensland

Competing in: Archery, athletics, cycling, indoor rowing, sitting volleyball and swimming

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I suffered a massive stroke in 2020, which left me completely paralysed on my right side. I was unable to talk or eat. Doctors told me I would never walk again. I still have deficiencies on my right side, including a non-functional right hand. I also have other physical and mental health issues.

Sport background: I have always loved sport. I played baseball, softball and netball when I was young and continued netball until my injury. While serving in the Army, I represented North Queensland and Western Australia in several interservice netball competitions.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Before my stroke, I was fit and healthy, and this helped my recovery and rehabilitation. Being physically fit before my stroke helped me recover quicker. I had to learn to move, walk, eat, speak and write again. I went from being paralysed to walking and trying to run within 2 months while still in hospital. I was even trying to play handball in a wheelchair with my children. I have used my love of fitness to build up strength and to motivate others.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? I have been on my rehabilitation journey for the past 4 years. I want to recover the best I can for both myself and my family. To have the opportunity to be part of Team Australia fills me with a sense of pride. To be able to stand alongside my teammates and compete with other amazing people from different countries is a once in a lifetime achievement.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Marrying my wife and my 2 children.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? To test myself and use my positive attitude and story to help other people.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? Competing at the Games is 'winning' enough, but to be back in a team environment and helping support other competitors is a big bonus.

Who is supporting you at the Games? My wonderful wife, 2 children and my mother-in-law. I have an amazing team of health professionals that has helped me get to where I am today, and they will be cheering the team and myself on from Australia.

Diane Jackson

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Air Force in 1990 as a Supply Clerk working in Darwin, before being posted to Amberley. In 2001 I commissioned to become a Logistics Officer and once again served in Darwin until 2008 when I went to Canberra to work in health and safety. I held the position of Hazardous Chemicals Project Manager until my medical discharge in 2017.

Other information: I am retired but keep active as Ladies Secretary for my lawn bowls club. I have many nicknames, but my favourite is 'Phantom'. I have been married to Russ for 26 years. He's my 'rock' and a fun guy.

Age: A young 58

Hometown: Maryborough, Victoria

Current town: The beautiful one day, perfect the next, Airlie Beach, Queensland

Competing in: Athletics, cycling, powerlifting and indoor rowing

What is the nature of your injury or illness? My illness is called Hereditary Spastic Paraplegia, which is an extremely rare condition that causes slow progressive neuromuscular degeneration in the lower limbs. It produces spasticity, weakness, neurogenic pain, foot drop, knee hyperextension, stumbling and falling.

Sport background: My main sport growing up was hockey and I went onto play several years with the ADF. In retirement I took up lawn bowls and play in a wheelchair. The highlight has been playing in the Queensland State Multi Disability Bowls Championships each year. As part of my rehabilitation, I took up powerlifting. I have competed in many competitions and achieved personal bests each time. I think my greatest sporting moment is being able to compete in sports I thought were unreachable, but aren't if I explore the opportunities. It's just awesome.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport is an important component of my physical and mental health. I have always loved sport so having to continually work on my physical health has not been difficult. To constantly make improvements in sport is extremely rewarding, and this, in hand with positive comments from those around me, assists my mental health.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? I was extremely excited, grateful and thinking of the prospects that may flow on from it.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Tough question really, probably my military career, and then my continual fight to delay progression of my condition.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? I wanted to experience playing sport with people who have similar challenges and goals.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? I think I have already won. Being a member of a team competing in adaptive sports against other countries will be a truly amazing experience.

Who is supporting you at the Games? My husband will be supporting me at the Games as my carer and supporter. Back in Australia, my supporters will be my Mum, Joan, and my friends, Shaz, Leesa, Pam, Alex and Yvette.

Sergeant Emily Lahey

ADF service: I joined the Australian Army as a Command Support Clerk in 2010. I have been posted to 6th Aviation Regiment, Special Operations Engineer Regiment and 3rd Health Support Battalion. I deployed on Operation Highroad (Afghanistan) in 2015 and Operation Accordion (United Arab Emirates) in 2019.

I am currently posted to Headquarters 4th Brigade, where I remain on long term medical leave.

Other information: I live by the beach with my husband, Jason, and our two dogs, Olive and Molly.

Age: 32

Hometown: Launceston, Tasmania

Current town: Melbourne, Victoria

Competing in: Athletics, indoor rowing and powerlifting

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have Stage IV cancer, affecting my sinuses, skull and brain. I have complete loss of vision in my left eye due to the tumour's position and have mental health conditions.

Despite being diagnosed in 2019, the rarity of this cancer typically sees a life expectancy of six to nine months. While there have been setbacks and many unknowns, I remain on a targeted treatment intervention and my condition is currently stable.

Sport background: I come from a family of sport lovers. Having rowed and played netball and soccer during high school, I now enjoy strength and high intensity interval style training, cycling and reformer Pilates.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Exercise has been a big part of my rehabilitation, while also benefitting my mental health and general wellbeing. Arguably, it has given my body a greater ability to fight during treatment.

There was a point in time where I was unable to walk the short distance to the end of my street due to the crippling effects of chemotherapy. Since then, I have worked hard to regain physical strength and look forward to pushing myself even harder to see what I'm capable of in preparation for the Games.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team?
Excited, nervous, determined and above all, extremely fortunate.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Surviving to be able to tick things off my 'living list', including walking the Three Capes Track in Southern Tasmania, buying a house, swimming with whale sharks in Exmouth, swimming in the pool at

the Marina Bay Sands, Singapore, getting married... and there's still plenty more to do!

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? I applied for Warrior Games to find a new focus and have something to work towards. Since being away from the regular workforce, I have missed the camaraderie and day-to-day interaction with work colleagues and mates, and the feeling of being part of something meaningful.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? Being selected to represent Australia at the Games is already a huge win in my books.

Who is supporting you at the Games? My husband, Jason, my parents, Sharyn and Dean, my brother and sister, Darcy and Maggie, and my mother-in-law, Terrie, are my biggest supporters. Alongside extended family and friends, they will be cheering me on from the sidelines here in Australia.

Brett Lewis

ADF service: I enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force in June 2002 as a cook. Within a couple of years, I posted to Australia's Federation Guard before transferring to become an Administration Clerk in 2007. In 2017, I commissioned to become an Operations Officer before medically discharging in February 2019.

I was fortunate to deploy to Timor-Leste in 2012 to 2013 as a part of the administration team on Operation Astute. In 2014, I was deployed to the Middle East to stand up the Orderly Room for Operation Okra.

Other information: I have been medically retired for 5 years now. My mates call me 'Louie'. I've been married for over 25 years and have been with my wife, Tracey, since we were 20. We have 3 sons, Kyle, Dylan and Tyler. Dad and Mum live in the King Valley in Victoria, and I have 2 sisters (I'm the middle child).

Age: 48

Hometown: Wangaratta, Victoria

Current town: Wodonga, Victoria

Competing in: Indoor rowing, powerlifting, shooting and wheelchair basketball

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have a spinal injury that has seen me be the lucky recipient of a triple spinal fusion, artificial disc, caged discs and removal of 3 spinous processes. I have received multiple left knee surgeries (and am awaiting a new knee), have had several shoulder surgeries, and half my left bicep has been removed. I came close in 2006 to losing my left leg to a golden staph infection, but the doctors were lucky enough to save it after extensive treatment.

Sport background I played baseball growing up. I was also into road cycling throughout my teens and 20s. I competed with my little sister as my partner in the late 80s in rock 'n' roll dancing (but that ceased when I grew 8.5 inches in under 12 months). Currently, I train at a local gym, owned and operated by an Army veteran husband and wife team. I play for the local wheelchair basketball team in Wodonga and assist the coach when I can. I have competed in the CrossFit Open and been a team member in the 24 Hours of Heroes.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? I was told I wouldn't be able to lift or do much of any exercise after my spinal surgeries. Sport has given me a new focus on life. I have been shown no matter the severity of the injury, there's always something you can be doing to keep active. I now spend my days surrounding myself with people who inspire me and are willing to help me along my journey.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? I have been working towards this goal for nearly 4 years, so when I got the call I felt a great deal of pride and achievement. Although I'm injured, I still have been afforded the

opportunity to represent my country. I remember thinking, 'I'm a part of a team again', and will have the camaraderie I had within the Australian Defence Force.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Apart from getting through all the challenges my injuries have thrown at me over the last 8 years, I would 100 per cent say, my beautiful wife and 3 sons. They are my foundation. I could not have achieved what I have without them by my side.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? My coaches told me I needed a goal to strive for; something that wouldn't take 2 months, but something I could work towards. One of my coaches is a past Invictus Games team member. He started talking about his experiences and it was exactly what I was looking for, so in 2020 my training began and in 2023, my doctor signed off on my EOI for Warrior Games.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? Getting out there and giving it my all. So long as I am happy and I'm smiling, then in my books, I'm a winner.

Who is supporting you at the Games? My wife, Tracey, sister, Nadia, and her husband, Scott, will all be in Florida cheering me on. My sons, parents and other sister have already asked for links so they can watch it all from Australia.

Jo Lovell

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1999 as a Communications Information Systems Sailor. I deployed in 2003, 2004 and 2005 as part of Operation Slipper, Operation Catalyst and Operation Relex.

I decided I wanted to do something different and changed category to become a photographer in 2006.

I deployed as part of Operation Quickstep to Fiji in 2006, Victoria Fire Assist in 2009, Timor-Leste in 2009, Solomon Islands in 2010, Afghanistan in 2010 and 2011, Queensland Flood Assist in 2011, and broader protection of Northern Territory from 2013-14.

I was discharged in 2016.

Other information: I am a Project Officer at Veterans' and Families' Hub in northwest Tasmania, and I am studying a Bachelor of Education and volunteering to become a veterans advocate. My husband, Jason, and I have a son named Jack, who was named after my husband's great uncle, Flight Sergeant John Jack, who was shot down over France during World War II.

Age: 43

Hometown: Sydney, New South Wales

Current town: Stanley, Northwest Tasmania

Competing in: Athletics, archery, cycling and swimming

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have both physical and mental health issues.

Sport background: Growing up I did ice skating (figure skating) at the Macquarie Ice Rink and played netball and basketball. I attended Yanco Agricultural High School in the Riverina.

I played rugby union in 2000 and 2001 with the Navy. During my deployments I got into sprint triathlons.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport has played a significant role throughout my life, serving as a source of joy, challenge and personal growth. Sport has always been a fundamental part of my identity.

Transitioning to adulthood and joining the Navy introduced me to a new sport, rugby union, which provided camaraderie and physical exertion opportunities. Despite setbacks due to injuries, I explored different individual sports, including sprint triathlons during deployments. Upon relocating to Tasmania, I later attempted a team sport, field hockey.

However, throughout my journey, I've encountered challenges finding sports that fully accommodate my limitations. Despite these obstacles, my passion for sports has never waned. Whether successful or not, each sporting endeavour has provided valuable lessons and experiences.

In spite of the hurdles, engaging in various sporting activities has remained vital to my rehabilitation journey. It offers physical benefits, emotional solace and a sense of belonging. Each sport has contributed to my resilience, teaching me adaptability and determination.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team?

Being told I had made the Warrior Games team was an incredibly uplifting moment for me. Participating in the Adaptive Sports Camp at the Australian Institute of Sport and exploring different sports that could be adapted to accommodate my needs was an eye-opening and empowering experience. It filled me with a sense of encouragement and optimism, knowing I could modify my sporting activities to train effectively and strive for personal and team success while surrounded by a supportive group.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Becoming a mum, despite the challenges presented by my endometriosis diagnosis, and being able to have one child stands as my most significant achievement to date. Numerous hurdles and emotional upheavals marked the journey to parenthood as I faced the daunting prospect of infertility. Enduring the physical and emotional toll of fertility treatments, alongside the uncertainty and heartache of setbacks, I persevered with unwavering determination. While the road to motherhood may have been more difficult than anticipated, the joy and fulfilment of welcoming my precious child into the world eclipsed all struggles. Holding my child in my arms, I found profound gratitude for the strength and resilience that carried me through the darkest moments.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? I applied to participate in Warrior Games because it offers a crucial component to my rehabilitation journey. Beyond the physical benefits, these sports provide a platform to enhance my mental and emotional wellbeing, which has been pivotal in navigating the challenges I've faced over the past few years. As a veteran, I am eager to contribute to the broader veteran community and see adaptive sports as a means to do so, aligning perfectly with the values and discipline instilled in me during my military service.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? 'Winning' would transcend mere victory in athletic competition. While achieving personal bests and standing on the podium would be incredible, true triumph lies in the camaraderie and shared experiences among fellow veterans. Ultimately, winning at the Games would mean embracing the spirit of unity, celebrating each other's successes and finding solace and inspiration in the collective journey of overcoming challenges.

Who is supporting you at the Games? At the Games, I am lucky to have an incredible support team rallying behind me. My husband and son, travelling from Tasmania, will be my steadfast companions, providing unwavering encouragement throughout the journey. Additionally, my sister, who resides in Canada, and my Afghanistan deployed boss, currently stationed with his family in America, will come

to Florida to witness this significant moment in my life. Friends back in Stanley, Tasmania are keen to tune in online.

Luke Manhire

ADF service: I joined the Australian Army in 2011 as a Rifleman stationed in Adelaide as part of the 7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (7 RAR). I deployed to Afghanistan in 2012 as part of the Guardian Angel Platoon. I medically discharged in June 2015.

Other information: I'm currently studying web design. I am a single father of 4 sons, aged between 2 and 23. I was known as 'Maddog Manie' while serving and kept the nickname 'Manie' after leaving. Motorcycles and gaming are my passions.

Age: 43

Hometown: Adelaide, South Australia

Current town: Craigmore, Adelaide, South Australia

Competing in: Archery, sitting volleyball and wheelchair rugby

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I suffer from bulging discs in my back, have an above the knee amputation of my left leg from a motorcycle accident in 2022 and suffer from anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress.

Sport background: I've dabbled in various sports over the years, from indoor cricket, baseball, Aussie rules, rugby union and league. I raced on dirt bikes for fun, did city to bay fun runs and cycling, but my passion was rugby.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Since my accident in 2022, sports and fitness have played a massive role, not only in my physical health but mental growth. I've engaged in so much more than I thought possible from adaptive ice hockey, basketball, rugby, volleyball and the hours spent in the gym building mental and physical strength.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? I was so excited as I never thought a day like this would have ever been possible for me.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Being a role model to my sons.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? I wanted to not only show myself, but to show my sons, you should never give up. No matter how many times you are knocked down, keep getting up and moving forward.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? Winning will be an amazing emotional feeling, but the joy of competing with my team and representing our country in adaptive sports will always be the ultimate win.

Who is supporting you at the Games? My parents, brothers and sisters, family and, of course, my sons. They may not be there in person, but they have my back no matter what.

Luke McCallum

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1997, 4 weeks after my 17th birthday. I was one of 4 under 18-year-olds in my division at recruit school. It made for a very interesting first year of service.

I served for almost 20 years as a Communications and Information Systems Sailor. My role included running every type of communications into and out of the ship, from emails received over a satellite link to coded signals via visual Morse code. My service took me on operations all over the world, including the Solomon Islands in 2000 and 2002, East Timor in 2001, the Middle East in 2002 and 2004, and border protection duties around the approaches to Australia from 2001 to 2005.

Other information: I have 2 sons, Austin (14) and Finn (9), 2 sausage dogs, Hannah and Rupert (Rupert is my blind from birth rescue puppy), and one basset hound named Rosie.

Since leaving the Navy, I have worked in the private sector, largely for Defence and other government agencies.

Age: 44

Hometown: Broken Hill, New South Wales

Current town: Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Competing in: Athletics, indoor rowing, powerlifting, shooting and sitting volleyball

What is the nature of your injury or illness? Early in my career I suffered a significant lower limb injury fast-roping from a helicopter. I got really knocked around and it took a long time to recover, but I did get myself back up and was able to continue to serve. Over time, the injuries continued to get worse and deteriorated to the point that an infection in my right leg compromised the metal in my foot and got into the bone, necessitating a below knee amputation.

Sport background: I had the typical 80s and 90s country town sports experience growing up. Cricket in the summer, AFL in the winter. I even got into lawn bowls in my teenage years, and I absolutely loved it. I then got to play lawn bowls during my time in the Navy, representing the ACT and the Navy on numerous occasions.

I recently got into adaptive sports, have competed in indoor rowing and wheelchair AFL, and have tried dragon boating, archery and pickleball.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? It took months for me to get back on my feet again after a gruelling rehabilitation program. I 'earned' my first prosthesis. Whilst it was great to get some sort of independence back and enjoy better quality of life from being in less pain, I entered a period of depression and anxiety. This lasted until I had a light bulb moment in June 2023 when I discovered an indoor rowing program.

Being involved in sport has made me a better father to my sons, made me take much more pride in my work and look forward to the challenges life presents me. Nothing will give me my leg back, but I can still achieve anything I put my mind to.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? In the words of my son, I was 'really hyped up.... pumped!'

I found out I had been selected while I was having a drink break during wheelchair AFL training. I found it quite appropriate I found out while participating in one of the adaptive sports that was my gateway to the Games.

What is your greatest achievement to date? In a sporting context, being able to medal at state and national level indoor rowing competitions in 2023 (just months after first participating in the sport through an Invictus Pathways Program) was an amazing experience. Having my youngest son see me compete and tell me he was proud of me, whatever the results might be, still brings a tear to my eye.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games?

I was looking for my tribe. I was looking to regain that feeling you get when you put on a uniform and work with amazing people to overcome adversity and achieve the mission provided.

I wanted to be surrounded by people who had a shared lived experience, who wanted to conquer those same fears I had, who wanted to show that, like me, they were not defined by the injuries that brought us together.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? A win for me is being able to step up on the international stage, surrounded by my teammates, knowing I have given my all and, regardless of any result, I have made my team, my family and my country proud.

Who is supporting you at the Games? Unfortunately, I won't have anyone supporting me at the Games, but many family and friends will be watching all of Team Australia compete on livestreams.

Lieutenant Commander Dave Miln

ADF service: I served nearly 15 years in the United Kingdom military as a Royal Marine Commando and Mine Warfare and Clearance Diving Officer.

I transferred to the Royal Australian Navy in 2019 as a Mine Warfare and Clearance Diving Officer before being selected for representational duties in San Diego.

Following an accident with my family in the snow while posted to the United States I spent a year undergoing rehabilitation.

I will be moving to the Australian Defence Force Diving School in my next posting.

Other information: I have a wife named Clare and we have two daughters who are five and three. My parents live in the United Kingdom and my brother lives in Brisbane with his family.

Age: 38

Hometown: Sydney, New South Wales

Current town: Sydney, New South Wales

Competing in: Athletics, cycling, power lifting, swimming and wheelchair basketball.

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I was involved in an accident with a snow removal machine in Northern California in December 2022. I rolled on top of my daughters to try and protect them before entering the machine and lost both my legs, fractured my pelvis into four pieces and broke six vertebrae. My wife was two meters behind my daughters and witnessed the event and undoubtedly saved all our lives with her actions. I spent 17 days in a United States hospital in ICU before being flown to Sydney to spend a further two months in hospital. 10 weeks after the accident I received my first set of prosthetic legs and was discharged to rehabilitation. I discharged from rehabilitation and returned home at the end of April 2023. I subsequently was readmitted to hospital for further operations for complications throughout 2023.

Sport background: I played rugby, hockey, athletics and cross country growing up. After joining the military, I took up adventure sports and gained qualifications in white water kayaking, skiing, skydiving, diving and climbing. Post my accident I found real joy playing team sports such as wheelchair basketball with my local club Manly as well as getting back into the water to surf and downhill mountain bike.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport has and always will play a major role in both my mental and physical rehabilitation. It keeps me grounded, focused and allows me to be the best version of myself.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? Elated to be selected for the team and be participating on an international stage 18 months after the accident.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Finding my wife and having our daughters.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? To provide me goals, meet like-minded people, share stories, take motivation from others and show my daughters that no matter what happens in life you can always achieve what you want.

What will “winning” look like for you at the Games? Setting new personal bests.

Who is supporting you at the Games? My wife Clare, along with my daughters will be joining me at the Games and my close family in Australia and the United Kingdom will be watching at home.

Flight Lieutenant Ryan Mostyn

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Air Force as a Firefighter in August 2009. I was posted to Williamstown before relocating to Canberra with the Federation Guard in 2015, where I was fortunate to visit Villers-Bretonneux and Gallipoli for ANZAC Day.

In September 2018 I commissioned and became an Environmental Health Officer and was posted to Amberley where I worked on Operation Flood Assist in Lismore and Moree in 2022.

I am currently posted to the No. 1 Expeditionary Health Squadron Detachment in Richmond.

Other information: I am learning Spanish and can speak a basic Tagalog. My mother and 2 brothers live in Queensland and my partner's name is Cielo. I am studying a Post Graduate Diploma at the University of New South Wales in Psychology.

Age: 33

Hometown: Gladstone, Queensland

Current town: The Ponds, Sydney, New South Wales

Competing in: Athletics, shooting and sitting volleyball

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in March 2023. Initial symptoms started in September 2022 and included a headache for 5 to 6 weeks, eyelid twitches and sometimes I had tingling in my hands and feet. Overall, I had a general sense of feeling unwell which was hard to explain at the time.

Sport background: I have always enjoyed running growing up but never ran too far, mostly 5 kilometres. Upon my diagnosis I decided to train and run in the Sydney City to Surf 14 kilometre event in 2023. My time was one hour and 9 minutes.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? It's played a positive role on my mental and physical health. I chose to get fitter during my diagnosis knowing I would now have to take my health more seriously. Getting selected for Warrior Games will bring a sense of belonging with others going through their own health battles.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? I felt thrilled to be selected for the Warrior Games team.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Running the 14 kilometres last year was a pretty big achievement. Also, I love to travel and have been to 30 countries. The United States for Warrior Games will be country number 31 for me.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? I have a work colleague who encouraged me to do it. She said it would be good for me and would be an amazing opportunity if I got selected.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? For me, it isn't about coming first, but my competitive nature will come out in the sprints, 800 and 1500 metre races. I would like to believe getting selected and attending with a great bunch of people is already a win.

Who is supporting you at the Games? My mum at home; my partner may also be coming on the trip. I have a friend in the United States who I would like to meet. We have been pen pals and never physically met, but have consistently remained in touch for over 20 years.

Georgia Murrell

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Navy in February 2021 as a Boatswain's Mate. I medically discharged in April 2024. I was part of the Commissioning of HMAS Stalwart in 2021 and sailed her commissioning tour.

Other information: My nickname is Muzz. I have an older brother Connor who is also serving as a Boatswain's Mate posted to HMAS Cerberus.

My partner Leading Seaman Shaun Iselin, who is a Boatswain's Mate on HMAS Stuart and I have been together two years and have nearly finished building our first home.

Age: 24

Hometown: Goulburn, New South Wales

Current town: Golden Bay, Perth, Western Australia

Competing in: Sitting volleyball, swimming and wheelchair rugby

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have an auto immune disease known as Guillain-Barré Syndrome. This illness makes your immune system attack your nervous system, which left me completely paralysed in December 2021. I had to learn to walk again, speak again and use the muscles in my body to make them work again. With lots of rehabilitation I have almost made a full recovery with the exception of lingering nerve damage, which effects the muscles in my body from performing for long periods of time.

Sport background: Growing up, I was heavily involved in all sports. There was never a sport I didn't have a crack at. However, I excelled in competitive swimming, representing my district and often competing at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra. My other passion is touch football which I played and refereed in my hometown and got my start playing under Ashley Mewburn as my coach and mentor. I then went onto playing in representative teams in the mixed and woman's competition for Goulburn Marinos. This fuelled my love of the sport as I got to play alongside my older brother. Over the years moving around I have played for various clubs in the Australian Capital Territory and Melbourne. I now play and coach for the Freemantle Rebels.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport has always been a huge part of my identity, and being able to take part in team sports is what has kept me going and allowed me to get stronger in a way that feels comforting and at home with myself.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? I still can't find the right words, it feels so surreal and it's an incredible opportunity to be able to do this as part of my naval career coming to an end.

What is your greatest achievement to date? I would definitely have to say making this team and fulfilling a childhood dream of wearing the green and gold!

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? I wanted to meet people like myself, and hear their stories. I think it's important to surround yourself in a team environment of people who understand your day to day struggles and still support you no matter what life has handed you, everyone is an equal and valuable team player.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? That first moment taking to the court with my team will be a winning feeling for sure.

Who is supporting you at the Games? My family will all be watching and cheering me on from Australia. I'm sure my mum will have everyone around at our house for the opening day.

Sue Osborn

ADF service: I joined the Australian Army in 1993, initially as a Medic before transferring to Artillery to become an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Operator in 2009. I had a very fortunate career, with a couple of highlights including being a Recruit Instructor at Kapooka, Drill Instructor at Duntroon and achieving my parachute qualifications as part of the Parachute Surgical Team. I spent time in the United States and New Zealand and deployed to the Solomon Islands in 1995, East Timor in 2002 and Afghanistan in 2010 and 2012.

Other information: I am employed part-time as a Senior Consultant at Mirragin Consulting, a drone, robotics, and artificial intelligence company. I live on the Gold Coast with my partner, Renee, and 8 year old daughter, Bella.

Age: 48

Hometown: Gold Coast, Queensland

Current town: Gold Coast, Queensland

Competing in: Athletics, powerlifting, sitting volleyball and wheelchair basketball

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have severe arthritis in my ankles, knees, lumbar and spine because of my service. I had a full knee replacement and will have an ankle replacement later this year and the other knee replaced in 2025. I have tinnitus and I'm partially deaf in one ear.

Sport background? Sport was my life. I was a nipper in surf lifesaving from childhood, before playing competitive touch football from age 15. I represented the ADF at national levels in soccer, rugby union, AFL and touch football. I also played rugby league in Sydney and represented NSW.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Until this year, I refrained from playing sports due to injuries sustained since 2009. However, upon attending the first selection camp and engaging in wheelchair rugby and basketball, it felt as though my previous sporting life had been resurrected. Suddenly, I envisioned a future where sport played a significant role once again.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? It was a mix of emotions - pride, gratitude, excitement and some disbelief. I miss the camaraderie of team sport and I'm pumped to be involved in training that is not just for rehabilitation.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Overcoming the heartache of loss and succeeding in life after service.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? I wanted to find a way back to doing the things I love and miss from team sport.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? A team of lifelong friends.

Who is supporting you at the Games? I will be unaccompanied at the Games, but my partner and daughter are supporting me with family, friends and neighbours back home.

Ben Owens

ADF service: I joined the Australian Army in 1989 and served for 30 years until I medically discharged in 2019. I initially joined as a Signals Officer and later specialised in project management. I deployed with United Nations missions in Cambodia in 1993 and South Sudan in 2014.

Other information: I am married with 2 adult children and my parents live on the South Coast of New South Wales where I grew up. I have 2 siblings. Since I am medically retired, I do some volunteer work.

Age: 53

Hometown: Albion Park Rail, Wollongong, New South Wales

Current town: Melbourne, Victoria

Competing in: Archery, sitting volleyball, swimming and wheelchair rugby

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have progressive nerve damage to my hands and feet from an autoimmune condition.

Sport background: At school I was a keen Scout, did regular swimming training and played competitive squash. Now I participate in local and regional wheelchair rugby competitions and events.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? I saw the Aussie Invictus Games wheelchair rugby team smash the rest of the world at Invictus Games Sydney 2018 and was immediately hooked. It was such a great combination of technical, tactical and physical prowess, with a fantastic camaraderie between everyone across the teams. I promised myself I would make it onto the Aussie team, and this has provided the necessary focus during my treatment and forced retirement.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? Excited and relieved. I trained hard through COVID-19 and waited impatiently through the recent Invictus Games. Along the way I've set myself several challenges I want to accomplish, but none rank higher than representing Australia under the auspices of the Australian Defence Force once again.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Professionally, I am particularly proud of delivering new equipment and capabilities to the Tri-Service Explosive Ordnance Disposal community (bomb disposal technicians). From a sporting perspective, I've played in the 'B' team for state and national level wheelchair rugby championships. By far, my favourite sporting experience is playing against the Aussie Invictus Games team at a simple training match in 2019. I felt an instant bond with them that eclipsed any connection with my civilian teammates, and it cemented my resolve to make it to the Warrior and Invictus Games.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? Previous competitors have raved about how well organised the Warrior Games are, and I'm excited to see the spectacle, meet our opposition and then beat them!

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? The Aussie team smashing it in the wheelchair rugby, regardless of the final score. I love the physicality, the tight teamwork and the smiles on everyone's faces after a fierce battle.

Who is supporting you at the Games? My wife, children and parents.

Jason Readdy

ADF service: I joined the Army in March 1991 before discharging in August 2022. During my career I deployed to Somalia, East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan. I also worked on the introduction of the Special Forces Air Drop Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat.

Other information: I am married to my wife, Natasha, and have children. I have 2 siblings, Andrew and Zoey.

Age: 50

Hometown: Hervey Bay, Queensland

Current town: Perth, Western Australia

Competing in: Archery, cycling and indoor rowing

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have had multiple left and right shoulder replacements, a right hip replacement and multiple surgeries on my left and right knees.

Sport background: Growing up I played rugby league and did athletics. I was the Queensland champion for javelin.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Adaptive sport gives me a great source of mental stimulation and pride, knowing that I can still do something active.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? Extremely excited to have the opportunity to have a clear direction to motivate myself.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Having children and passing the Special Air Service Regiment selection course.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? I needed a sense of direction after leaving the Defence Force and adaptive sport seemed the best option due to my injuries. Hopefully my attendance will give me the confidence, knowledge and understanding of what sports I can participate in without further aggravating my injuries.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? Just getting out there, having a go and supporting my teammates.

Who is supporting you at the Games? I don't have anyone travelling with me to the Games, but I know my friends and family will be cheering me and the team on from back home.

Laura Reynell

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Navy as a Boatswain's Mate. During my service I deployed to South East Asia twice and around Australia. I was medically discharged in 2020.

Other information: I am studying and renovating while also hanging out with my 2 dogs (best friends), Layla and Louie, at the beach.

Age: 29

Hometown: Cleveland, Brisbane, Queensland

Current town: Jervis Bay, South Coast, New South Wales

Competing in: Athletics, wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby

What is the nature of your injury or illness? During my deployment in 2017 I was badly injured by a machine gun. This resulted in countless surgeries, twice learning to walk again, having my foot fully pinned and 12 months later having a joint replacement on that same foot. I still suffer from intense nerve damage in my leg and lower back, along with not being able to feel my right foot at all.

I am waiting to have my next surgery where all the above is going to be removed and replaced with a new plate and screwed together. I will need to learn to walk again. This surgery is aiming to reduce the nerve damage and pain, however there is only a 30 per cent chance of it working and, if it doesn't, I am looking at amputation.

Sport background: Growing up I played competitive soccer, touch football, swimming and athletics. Before my accident I was playing local and representative touch football. I had also just started CrossFit. It took around 3 years after my accident before I could start going to CrossFit again. Since then, I have played touch football again and even made representative teams along with doing local CrossFit competitions with friends for fun.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation?

Sport has always been my biggest outlet, so losing that to the point where I couldn't get out of bed, have a shower or just do basic everyday tasks without assistance, put me in a pretty dark place. Once I started the journey of learning to walk and getting my independence back, I began looking at local gyms to join, even if it meant I could only go for 20 minutes at the start. This helped with my mood, my confidence, my strength, balance and, overall, me being able to prove to myself that I am stronger than I think I am.

To say sport has played an integral part of my rehabilitation would be an understatement but, if there is any advice I could give other people, it is to make sure you find 'your people'. I'm not sure if I just got really lucky with the circle of friends that I have, but I don't think I would have recovered as well without them. They never judged me or looked at me any differently, and I think that played a major role in me just going through the motions of learning the 'new me'. I also owe a shout out to my dog, Layla. She was only a puppy when I was learning to walk again but she gave me the confidence to leave the house. She not only helped introduce me to my circle of friends, but she helped with my darkest days.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team?

I was so excited. I had the most amazing experience at Invictus Games Düsseldorf 2023 listening to the stories and learning from other competitors.

What is your greatest achievement to date? I was super lucky and grateful to represent Australia at Invictus Games Düsseldorf 2023. However, my greatest achievement would be my ability to prove to myself, no matter how many setbacks I have or how many times I have been told I will never be able to do something, that I can push myself to get back up and put one foot in front of the other. I feel like my perseverance is my greatest achievement.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? I have a lot to still learn, not just about myself but also other people. Where I live is quite remote, so when it comes to sporting opportunities for adaptive athletes there are limitations. I feel there is no better place than a program like the Invictus or Warrior Games. It gives you the chance to compete in an environment where you are surrounded by people who support, understand, empower and push you, while being able to relate in a way that people who haven't enlisted cannot understand.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? It is being able to connect and meet other competitors, as well as being able to listen to their stories and learn from them. If I can make a new friend or just be able to learn more about how someone has overcome their struggles, then that is a win for me.

Who is supporting you at the Games? I have a tight knit group of friends and family back home who I'm sure will be watching me and cheering me on.

Tricia Reynolds

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Air Force in 1999 before medically discharging in March 2020. I was a Military Working Dog Handler for the majority of my career. I deployed to Timor-Leste in 2008, Al Minhad Air Base, Dubai in 2009, Afghanistan in 2010 and Al Dhafra Air Base, Abu Dhabi in 2016.

Other information: I've been married to my husband, Harvey, for 19 years. We have a cat called Winston, who is plotting world domination, and I have my assistance dog, Elke. I work part-time at Dogs for Life, where I place assistance dogs with people who have disabilities from all over Australia.

Age: 45

Hometown: Glenalta, South Australia

Current town: Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Competing in: Archery, shooting and wheelchair basketball

What is the nature of your injury or illness? Being a dog handler is a physically demanding job and, after numerous surgeries for a chronic hip injury, I had a total hip replacement at 39. Unfortunately, the surgery didn't go as planned and I was never able to return to full-time work, which sadly led to my military discharge.

Sport background: I played basketball and lacrosse as a child and later took up muay thai kickboxing. Unfortunately, none of these sports are possible anymore, but I have recently found wheelchair basketball and developed a passion for it.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? In 2021 I bought a compound bow and took up archery, with the goal of representing Australia at either Invictus Games or Warrior Games. It was a way to meet people, and it gave me something to be passionate about after leaving the Air Force. When I'm on the range, I forget about the pain and anything else that may otherwise be distracting me. Everyone I've met in the archery world has been amazingly supportive and so happy to help me on my journey. This has helped more than words can describe in my rehabilitation.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? You still can't take the smile off my face.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? For the team tracksuit and Disneyworld, but in all seriousness it's the camaraderie. I miss this greatly from my time in the military. To be able to compete in a safe environment with no judgement from others, which I would struggle to find in a normal gym.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? Having my husband and my Mum and Dad watching me compete at an international event is the biggest win for me.

Jamie Adam Smyth

ADF service: I joined the Army as part of the Royal Australian Artillery in April 2012 and became a Missile Number. I was posted to Woodside Barracks in Adelaide Hills before medically discharging in November 2016.

Other information: After leaving the Army I went back into a sales role where I still am today, working for a large home builder in north Adelaide.

I am a father of 2 boys, Arlo and Cruz, and have been married to Tarsha since 2017.

Age: 34

Hometown: Adelaide, South Australia

Current town: Adelaide, South Australia

Competing in: Athletics, wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I suffered an injury to my knee during a training incident which resulted in mental health issues.

Sport background: I grew up playing AFL, NRL, soccer, baseball and golf. Before enlisting in the Army, I was considering trying to pursue a career in golf.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Following my injury, I had to put a stop to the sports I loved. It wasn't until I joined the University of South Australia Invictus Pathways Program in 2021 that I got back into sport and was introduced to wheelchair AFL. It's given me sport back, a competitive edge and a social group.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? Over the moon! I applied for Warrior Games in 2021 and was unsuccessful, so since then it's been my goal to reach Warrior Games and Invictus Games. I feel a huge sense of achievement.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Firstly, my wife and kids. They've been huge supporters of me and given me the push.

My most recent personal achievement was at the 2023 Wheelchair AFL National Championship, where I was awarded South Australia's Most Valuable Player and was named in the Australian Team.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? A new goal to aim for and to challenge myself.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? Being selected for the Australian team is winning, but being able to share the moment with the rest of the team is going to be special.

Who is supporting you at the Games? I'm hoping to get my wife and kids across to support me. They missed out on coming to Melbourne for the Wheelchair AFL National Championship, so fingers crossed we can make it happen. If not, I'm sure the family and my friends back home will get together and stream it.

Lieutenant Kirby Watts

ADF service: I joined the Army in 2018 as an Education Officer before transferring to the Royal Australian Navy as a Training Systems Officer earlier this year.

Other information: I live with my partner, Joe, my 3 children, Mia (17), Clive (9) and Fleur (10 months), and our sleepy 12-year-old staffy named Dizzee.

Age: 34

Hometown: Narooma, New South Wales

Current town: Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Competing in: Ultimate Champion. To earn the Ultimate Champion title, participants compete in their respective classifications in eight sporting events. The Ultimate Champion is the competitor who earns the most points in the eight events.

What is the nature of your injury or illness? In 2022, I was in a serious motor vehicle accident where I sustained multiple injuries to my leg which resulted in a permanent impairment.

Sport background: Before I was injured, I played a variety of sports, including AFL (the national Army team and club level), ran marathons and did CrossFit.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Ever since my accident I have not been involved in sport. I have focused primarily on building the strength and range of motion in my leg, to allow me to walk and eventually return to AFL.

How did you feel when you were told you made the Warrior Games team? Stoked; proud as punch. It's like I had a new lease on life.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Winning a marathon, my children and learning how to walk again.

Why did you apply for Warrior Games? To push myself out of my comfort zone and confront my demons after excluding myself from sport for so long.

What will 'winning' look like for you at the Games? Standing with my teammates arm-in-arm. The sense of accomplishment in being able to compete at this level and attempting sports I thought I would never be able to do again.

Who is supporting you at the Games? My amazing partner, Joe, and our 3 children, Mia, Clive and Fleur. We get to celebrate our daughter's first birthday at Disneyworld!