

# Rory Cooper renowned wheel chair designer and researcher visits Carlisle Barracks

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## Renowned wheel chair designer Rory Cooper visits Carlisle Barracks



Cooper, founder and senior researcher at the University of Pittsburgh Human Engineering Research Lab spoke at the National Disability Employment Awareness event held here at the Letort View Community Center, Oct. 16.

Cooper, an Army veteran, has dedicated his career to engineering the most optimal wheel chair that can be made for the disabled. It all began for him in 1980, while cycling in Germany when he was struck by a truck which left his lower body paralyzed.

“Running was a big part of my life, running 10,000 and 5,000 meters while in the Army,” Cooper said. “Then you get injured and you have to start all over again. I started out with an 80-pound wheel chair and began trying to get back in shape.”

“I started and finished in the back when i started running in 5k’s. In a few years I started and finished in the front. People began to change their attitudes. Instead of patting you on the head and saying how great it is that you are out here, they started to view you as an athlete and as an equal.”

“This is why we have the Warrior Games and National Veteran’s Wheel Chair Games. Sport...is a great way to trick the disabled into doing rehab. They are having fun, continue to work out and understand why they do their therapy,” he said.

“The best part of success,” he says, is “being able to help veterans and people with disabilities find and pursue their dreams.”



**Dr. Rory Cooper talks with a local student interested in an internship at his University of Pittsburgh lab, Letort View Community Center, Carlisle Barracks, Oct 16.**



Cooper earned his BS and MEng degrees in electrical engineering from California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo in 1985 and 1986, respectively. He earned a PhD in electrical and computer engineering with a concentration in bioengineering from the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1989.

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