

Jim Thorpe Sports Days fast approaching

Suzanne Reynolds, Erin Stattel and Thomas Zimmerman Army War College Public Affairs Office

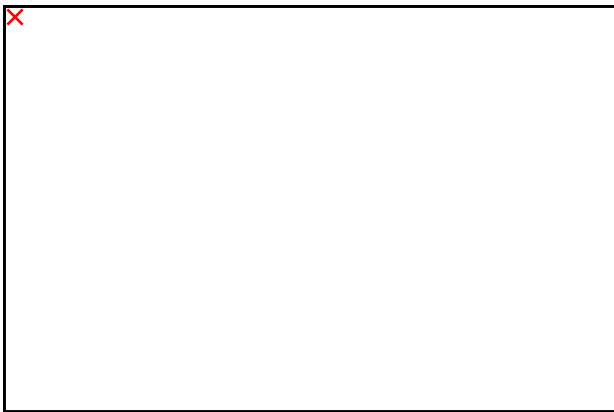
Jim Thorpe Sports Days fast approaching

March 1, 2010 -- Future allies and friends on the battlefield will face-off on the athletic fields during the 2010 Jim Thorpe Sports Days April 22-24 at Carlisle Barracks.

Like the traditional rivalry of the annual Army-Navy Football Game, Jim Thorpe Sports Days pits Army, Marine, Air Force, Coast Guard, Interagency and International Fellow students against each other in an annual match up of the nation's senior service schools.

Participants from the Air War College, Industrial College Of The Armed Forces, National War College, Army War College and the Marine War College will compete in this years games.

During the three –day series of sports competitions, student athletes participate in 14 sporting events to include women's one-mile relay, men's two-mile relay, women's 5K run, men's five- mile run, men's and women's bowling; men's and women's golf; racquetball; basketball; soccer, softball, tennis, and volleyball.



Army War College students share a laugh during a pep-rally for take place April 22-24. Photo by Megan Clugh.

In addition to individual medals in each event, the college that accumulates the most points will be awarded the Commandants Cup.

The opening ceremony will be held at 1 p.m. on April 23 on Carlisle Barracks' Indian Field, located at the corner of

Ashburn Drive and Forbes Avenue.

Athletes prepare for competition

Websters dictionary defines "esprit de corps" as the common spirit existing in the members of a group and inspiring enthusiasm, devotion, and strong regard for the honor of the group. This is especially true for the student-athletes profiled below who will be competing in this year's Jim Thorpe Sports Days.

Racquetball

Lt. Col. Rick Zoller started playing racquetball as a freshman at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, Terre Haute, Ind., in 1983. According to Zoller, he mostly played to keep himself in shape during the football off season.

"During my first assignment in Munich, Germany, I became a serious player and played in quite a few tournaments," Zoller said. "I have no idea what my chances are of winning, but I know I'll give it my all," said Zoller. "I'm sure our coach, Bob Coon, will push us to be the best."

Zoller's last assignment was at Fort Gordon, Ga., where he worked capabilities development for the Signal Corps. After he graduates in June, Zoller is scheduled for assignment as the J6 of Strategic Command in Omaha, Neb.

Men's Running

Lt. Col. Jeffrey Powell came on active duty in 1983 as a private in the Field Artillery, received his commission in 1989 and is currently a Finance officer. He has deployed to the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan and will report to the Pentagon next.

Powell is trying out for the running team for the 5 mile run, and the bowling team and has experience in competitions like JTSD.

"I have competed in and won multiple swimming and weight lifting events over the years," he said. "Too bad neither is a JTSD event."

Powell has also run road races and or triathlons in the U.S., Germany, Italy, Bosnia, Kosovo, Croatia, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Lt. Col. Dirk Plante, a **Nuclear Research and Operations** officer, originally commissioned in the Corps of Engineers in 1989, will also take part in the running events.

"I'm training to compete in the men's running events, 4x800 meter relay and the 5 mile run," he said. Tryouts in April will determine the final roster for the events.

Plante said he's been a life-long athlete.

"I've liked running since my twin brother joined the high school cross country team," he said. He was real good, and of course I had to then join also to show him up. That never happened though, he was way better than me."

Plante said he has run quite a few marathons as well as shorter distances. At his last duty station, Fort Belvoir, Va., he participated in the installation's intramural program.

"I played in as many sports as possible, even if I wasn't naturally talented at them, like table tennis and racquetball."

Bowling

Col. John Cushman may be a 22-year logistics officer and garrison commander, but he has his eyes on a set of bowling pins that could lead the Army War College's bowling team to victory during the annual Jim Thorpe Sports

Days. The lanes are heating up as students brush up on bowling skills, trying to make the cut for the Jim Thorpe Sports Days Bowling Team.

With career moves that have taken him to Egypt, Israel, California, and in the not too distant future, the Caribbean, Cushman is looking to land some strikes and, maybe even a few turkeys, at the Bowling Center right here at Carlisle Barracks.

"The bowling team is not yet fully formed as all those who are trying out have until March 12 to bowl 18 games and the highest eight averages will make it," Cushman explained. "We have a men's and ladies' team and we practice on Fridays at 4 p.m."

Jim Thorpe Sports Days history

The event is named after Olympian Jim Thorpe who grew to national fame in football, track and other sports. He also attended the Carlisle Industrial Indian School.

Thorpe participated in the 1912 Olympic Games and blew away the competition in both the pentathlon and decathlon and set world records that would stand for decades. "This year's event marks the 100th anniversary that Thorpe was named first team All-American.

In 1950, the nation's press selected Thorpe as the most outstanding athlete of the first half of the 20th century and in 1996-2001, he was awarded ABC's Wide World of Sports Athlete of the Century for his Olympic accomplishments and as a professional football player.

A special guest this year will be Jim Thorpe's grandson, John Thorpe.

"This is truly a team effort to host this event, it takes everyone from the student athletes, full time employees and many volunteers whom we need to make this event happen," said Chuck Gentile, sports director. Gentile said he needs volunteers to act as road marshals, announcers and help to clean up.

To volunteer contact Gentile at 245-4343.