

## 34th Annual Jim Thorpe Sports Days April 23-25



*Lt. Col. Frank Misurelli, Army War College Public Affairs Office*

### 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Jim Thorpe Sports Days April 23-25

Feb. 5, 2009 -- Like the traditional rivalry of the annual Army-Navy Football Game, Jim Thorpe Sports Days pits Army, Navy, 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.

"This is a great opportunity to show your service spirit, just like the Army-Navy Game," said Dr. Craig Nation, an Army War College faculty member who has participated in the games as a running coach for ten years.

"The games are a great part of the senior service school experience," he said.

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

This year's event will kick off with the opening ceremony on Indian Field at 1 p.m. After the ceremony, the ladies one mile relay and the men's two mile relay will start off the day's events.

Nation will serve as an assistant running coach for this year's competition. Although he has never participated in the games, as an athlete he said he feels that the competition, "builds team work and discipline, and generate relationship that carry over into professional life."

Nation said he credits the success of the teams to those who coach them.

"We have had a fantastic team of coaches over the years, all of whom remain dedicated to the program, including Steve Kidder, Karl Thoma, Col. Christine Stark, and current head coach Air Force Col. Ben Leitzel," said Nation.

He also reflected on his athletic and personal relationship with Col. Brian Allgood, the top runner in the USAWC class of 2002. Allgood was killed in action when his helicopter crashed in northern Baghdad in January of 2007.

"Brian gave 110 percent of himself both off and on the track and is a symbol of the warrior spirit and we honor his service," said Nation.

During the three –day series of sports competitions, student athletes participate in 14 sporting events to include ladies one-mile relay, men's two-mile relay, ladies 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.

In addition to individual medals in each event, the college that accumulates the most points will be awarded the Commandants Cup which maintains the trophy until next year's competition.

"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.

### **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 100<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

Participating in this year's event will be Jim Thorpe's grandson, Mike Koehler, P.h.D., an author of numerous sports books.

To participate in an event, students should contact the coach for the event. A list of coaches can be found below.

Basketball Col. Mike Hoadley

Softball Col. Christian Brewer

Running Events Col. Ben Leitzel

Dr. Craig Nation

Bowling Mr. Pat Nolan

Golf Mr. Terry Myers

Tennis Dr. Marybeth Ulrich

Racquetball Retired Col. Bob Coon

Volleyball Col. George Teague

Retired Col. John Connelly

Soccer Col. Art Loureiro

Col. Jim Ruff

U.S. Army War College Archives - News Article - 05 March 2009