

Ø CLOSE WINDOW Ø

Print Page

Rigger NCO Earns Spot on U.S. Archery Team

By Staff Sgt.
Andrea M. Candlish,
4th PSYOP PAO

Sgt. 1st. Class
David "Keith" Trail
shot his way to
finish 8th out of
385 compound bow
archers at the
125th U.S. National
Archery
Tournament Aug. 3-
7 at Joyce Park in
Hamilton, Ohio.



His 8th place finish
secures a spot on
the U.S. Archery

Team (compound bow). He will represent the United States around the globe next year at World Cup tournaments. Trail finished 6th overall for Men's compound bow division in the National Archer's Association's rolling rankings.

Sgt. 1st. Class David "Keith" Trail competes in the compound bow competition in the 125th U.S. National Archery Tournament Aug. 3 to 7 in Hamilton, Ohio. Trail's 8th place finish helped him earn a spot on the US Archery Team.

Trail was one of the event's top competitors early on shooting his way onto the leader's board and staying there the duration of the competition. He stayed in contention throughout the tournament, finishing 8th overall on Friday with a total of 2092 points out of a possible 2160.

Trail said he was pleased with the outcome. "Coming in (I) needed to place in the top ten to keep my current ranking (in the NAA)," he said.

To compete at the U.S. Nationals, archers must post a cumulative score of 1400 or better out of 1440. They could also score at least 114 out of 120 in an Olympic round 12 arrow match single elimination round. The Archery season runs December through August.

Trail qualified for the Nationals when he posted a 119 out 120 in an Olympic round at the Arizona Cup in April. Altogether he competed at five major the National Archers Association tournaments this season.

He's also ranked second in the Nation for 3-D Archery and holds several records and titles in that category.

He credits his successful season in large measure to keeping his priorities straight and coaching Cody Thompson, 17, of Aberdeen, N.C. The world-class archer and his young charge would practice until 11 p.m. – sometimes midnight or later in Trail's basement. Thompson set his sights on outshooting his coach and Trail perfected his skill so that wouldn't happen.

"He's a lot of fun (to train with)," Thompson said. "He jokes around; but he is serious when he needs to be."

His tutelage under Trail has paid off. In July, Thompson won two Gold Medals at the 2009 World Archery Individual Youth Championships in Oden, Utah and earned a spot in the Youth Olympic Games in Singapore in 2010.

Trail said he first picked up a bow in 1993 as hobby to hunt "the abundance of deer" in his home state of Maryland.

Balance is the key to his success, he said. "As long as I keep my priorities straight I'm good. You have to realize that (it's) Family first, Army, archery."

Trail has served 21 years in the military as an Army parachute rigger. He is the non-commissioned officer in charge of the 4th Psychological Operations Group Rigger Facility at Fort Bragg. His coworkers know that he goes to archery competitions, although few know how proficient he is in the sport.

He excels on the job as well as the archery course. In the two years that she has worked with him, Trail's supervisor, Chief Warrant 2 Crystal Gonzalez says Trail always sets the standard on and off duty.

"He is a well rounded rigger; very knowledgeable about all sections of the rigger field."

While preparing for the U.S. National Trail also "ran the whole show" for planning airborne operations for the 2009 Rigger Rodeo, she said. He was also responsible for overseeing the rigorous inspection and packing of parachutes in support of the unit's airborne operations.

"The mission did not suffer at all while he was competing," Gonzalez added. "He exceeds the standards and wants his Soldiers to excel, not just meet the minimum."

The Soldiers in the 4th PSYOP Group Rigger Facility are quick to voice their admiration of their leader's professionalism. They know that he is passionate about archery and that he is committed to them.

"It's a privilege to work with him," said Spc. Sandra Prieto. "He's here for the Soldier. We all look up to him as the example."

Trail says his chain of command has been very supportive of his archery career. There is a complicating factor; since Compound Archery is not an Olympic event, he is not eligible for the Army's World Class Athlete Program that would allow him to be a full-time Army Archer. Instead he must use his own leave to attend competitions.

He says he will continue to compete for the "love of it" and for the "love of competition." For now, he says, it is enough that he has the opportunity to serve his nation as a Soldier and as an archer.

Ø CLOSE WINDOW Ø