

News story: Team UK unveiled for the Invictus Games Sydney 2018

The team of wounded, injured and sick (WIS) serving military personnel and veterans came together for the first time at Horse Guards Parade, London, this morning. They were joined by Prime Minister Theresa May who posed with the competitors for the first official team photograph and wished them luck for the Games in October.

The competitors, 64% of whom are new to Invictus, were also joined by Defence Ministers Gavin Williamson and Tobias Ellwood and former Team UK captains, including Paralympic Bronze medallist Dave Henson.

Defence Secretary, Gavin Williamson said:

I am delighted that competitors have been chosen to represent the UK at the next Invictus Games and look forward to following their journey from training camps to Sydney. The Invictus Games serve as a powerful reminder of the ability of sport to inspire and support the recovery of wounded and injured troops and veterans.

More than 451 WIS personnel and veterans applied for one of 72 places available on Team UK. The trials were attended by His Royal Highness Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, in one of their last joint appearances before the Royal Wedding.

The rigorous selection process for Team UK was based on the benefit the Invictus Games will give an individual as part of their recovery, combined with performance and commitment to training.

The 2018 UK Team Captain was also named this morning as Mark "Dot" Perkins, the former Royal Signals Corporal was discharged in 2005 and now works as a civil servant rehabilitating injured soldiers. He will compete in cycling and rowing. He said:

There are few moments in one's life when an event occurs that truly transforms your life, the Invictus Games is it. They are all about empowerment, they empower us all to fight the chains of physical disability, to fight the intangible burden of mental illness and they empower us to focus on being the best we can be despite the scars that we all now wear.

Whilst participating in the games our scars are like Medals that we can proudly display rather than hide in shame or embarrassment. Invictus allows us to be judged on what we can achieve, rather than what we can't. To simply be selected for Team UK was an amazing achievement. To then be further selected as the Captain and to

represent these incredibly brave men and women is extremely humbling, it is a huge privilege to be given this honour.

The team will compete in 11 sports: Athletics, Archery, Wheelchair Basketball, Cycling, Powerlifting, Indoor Rowing, Wheelchair Rugby, Swimming, Sitting Volleyball, Wheelchair Tennis and a new sport for 2018, Sailing.

The Royal British Legion will be supporting the friends and family, including carers, of Team UK as part of its work to recognise the vital and valuable contribution that they make to the recovery of WIS Service personnel and veterans.

The UK delegation to the Invictus Games Sydney 2018 is being delivered by a partnership comprising the Ministry of Defence (MOD), Help for Heroes, and the Royal British Legion.