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‘INCREDIBLE’ MODERN PENTATHLON CHALLENGE GIVES WAR VETERANS CHANCE TO COMPETE



A new Modern Pentathlon event for sufferers of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has won praise from the 2000 Olympic champion Dr Stephanie Cook (GBR).

The inaugural PentUp Challenge took place on October 14, 2017 at the Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst (GBR) and attracted 36 competitors.

Pent Up was founded by Dr Simon Thompson (a veteran and combat stress psychiatrist) and the competition was organised by Sue Hyde, former competitions director for Pentathlon GB.



Dr

Cook, the first women's Olympic pentathlon champion, participated as team manager and said afterwards: "It was inspirational to see Modern Pentathlon being used in such a beneficial way to aid recovery from PTSD.

"The stories that I heard from the veterans were humbling and grounding, and to hear the progress that they have made through the different elements of pentathlon was really incredible.

"As a doctor I know the beneficial effects of exercise and sport on mental health but this clearly demonstrated this in a way that I have never seen before."

This format and scoring system were adapted to accommodate athletes aged between 23 and 62 who had various degrees of ability and experience. Most had no experience at all and had to learn and train for all disciplines in eight months.

There were eight teams comprised of veterans, current armed services personnel, clinicians and

privateers and each team was led by a GBR Olympian who worked as coach and team support. Experienced competition officials worked throughout the day to ensure that the event ran smoothly, safely and fairly.

The PentUp Challenge reached out to include the families and friends of the veterans and their community support teams, whose role has been and continues to be an integral part of their recovery from PTSD.