

“Visually Impaired but Physically a Champion”

Judo Visions

Judo — creating a level playing field

VOL 8 #1



Captain Ivan Castro
U.S. Army
Special Forces Green Beret
Airborne



Badges



Blind Judo Foundation
635 San Mateo Ave.
San Bruno, CA 94066
650-589-0724

Ivan Castro Joins Blind Judo Foundation Board

Blind Army Officer Brings Hope to Military Personnel returning from war zones

Captain Castro is a highly decorated Army Officer who was blinded while providing sniper support in Iraq. Now back in the US he mentors and counsels fellow blind veterans by sharing his story, rebuilding hope, rehabilitation, education and information on adapted sports all while continuing to serve on active duty in the Special Forces. The Blind Judo Foundation will continue to seek collaborations with organizations supporting disabled veterans. Who better to lead those collaborations for the Foundation than Captain Ivan Castro.

Determined to Keep Serving

Only Blind Officer Serving in the Special Forces Elite Group Setting New Goals

Captain Castro said “Once you’re blind, you have to set new goals” and setting he is. December 2009 Captain Castro successfully completed a 20 week course called Maneuver Captains Career Course at Fort Benning, GA. He was the first blind student to attend. He was skeptical at first but this great American stayed the course. He is

thankful to cadre and classmates who encouraged and supported his determination to successfully graduate. Castro continues to push limits and will not allow his blindness to impair progress in making a difference. He continues to draw upon his experiences of a Special Forces team member and former platoon leader with the 82nd Airborne Division..

Castro Earns His Green Beret In Special Forces

Basic Training To Army Ranger To Special Forces Weapons Sergeant

Born in New Jersey to parents originally from Puerto Rico, Castro later moved to Puerto Rico with his mother. After graduating from High School, Castro was accepted by the University of Puerto on an athletic scholarship in track and field. Before completing his senior year at the University, Castro joined the US Army in 1990. Castro always strives to be the best. Army basic training doesn’t stop there in challenging Castro as he continued to the US Army Ranger Training Course and later going on to complete what most would consider grueling; the year long course of the Special Forces Green Beret training. To continue his commitment and dedication to America, and his love of being in the US Army, Castro enrolled in night school to complete a BA degree before being accepted, attending and completing the Army’s Officers Candidate School (OCS) and commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in 2004 as an Infantry Officer. Here he became responsible for reconnaissance and a sniper



Captain Castro (center) running Army 10 Miler with Fellow Officers.



Captain Castro
A Proud American

“You make a living by what you get; You make a life by what you give”



Coach Willy Cahill
CEO & Co-Founder



Ron C. Peck, MBA
CFO & Co-Founder

Blind Judo Foundation
24145 NE 122nd Street
Redmond, WA 98053

425-444-8256

blindjudofoundation.org
roncpeck@earthlink.net

platoon in the 82nd Airborne Division and in 2005 was deployed to Afghanistan for their elections.

Deployment Iraq Afghanistan

Experienced Veteran Deployed During Operation Desert Storm in Gulf War

Infantrymen learn from the class room experience and actual field duty as in Operation Desert Storm and later in Operation Desert Shield. Now a Captain, Castro, was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division in Iraq. In September 2006 Castro’s men relieved other paratroopers in Yusifiyah and after a night of fighting and volunteering to support his men, were exposed to a mortar round landing a few feet away killing Sergeant Porras and PFC Dreese and critically wounding Castro. Shrapnel damaged a shoulder, broke an arm, fractured facial bones, collapsed lungs, destroyed his right eye and left shrapnel in his left eye which doctors unsuccessfully could not save. With a continued positive attitude and never giving up, Castro heard about the Army Ten-Miler and Marine Corps Marathon. Here was Captain Castro’s next goal as a former track and field athlete.

Why is Judo Important?

Sport of Judo Enhances Confidence and Independence for Blind and Visually Impaired

Judo is an especially strong method of building personal, physical and emotional capabilities for blind and visually impaired persons. As a long distance runner, Captain

Castro personally realizes the advantages of having a “strong” body which helps to create a “strong” mind. Rehabilitation starts in the mind of those wounded in combat. Judo is just one of the means of rebuilding confidence and enhancing independence. Captain Castro wants to make a difference in the lives of returning military personnel that have become blind or visually impaired. As an athlete himself and a long distance runner, he has competed in several Army 10 Milers and full Marathons. This is called “determination” and setting new personal goals. Captain Castro is an inspiration to the blind and sighted alike with Judo being one of the tools for rehabilitation.

Wounded Warrior Project (WWP)

Raising Awareness and Enlisting Public Aid for Needs of Severely Injured Service Members

What started out providing “comfort items” for returning service members has expanded to complete rehabilitative efforts to assist warriors in recovery and transition back to civilian life. Thousands of wounded warriors and caregivers receive support each year through programs designed to nurture the mind, body and encourage economic development. To learn more about the Wounded Warrior Project click on www.woundedwarriorproject.org and help foster the most successful and well adjusted generation of wounded warriors in our nation’s history.

Carpe Diem!

