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USA TRIATHLON NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Leon's Triathlon to Host Inaugural USA Triathlon Military and First Responder National Championships on June 6

Event to be held as part of Leon's Triathlon, dubbed "America's Race," in Hammond, Indiana

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — USA Triathlon today announced it will host its first-ever USA Triathlon Military and First Responder National Championships this June to honor the service and sacrifice of military as well as police, fire and EMS personnel in the multisport community. The inaugural event will be held Sunday, June 6, in Hammond, Indiana, in conjunction with [Leon's Triathlon](#) — dubbed "America's Race" for its legacy of honoring and empowering U.S. service men and women, especially injured military veterans.

The 2021 event will take place on the 77th anniversary of D-Day, the Allied invasion of Normandy, at Wolf Lake Memorial Park — a 25-minute drive from downtown Chicago. Leon's Triathlon is broadcast annually through its partnerships with NBC and Comcast SportsNet, premiering over the Fourth of July holiday.

The Military and First Responder National Championships will include sprint-distance (500-meter swim, 11.6-mile bike, 3.1-mile run) and Olympic-distance (1,500-meter swim, 23.2-mile bike, 6.2-mile run) events. In both distances, the following categories will be honored for men and women: Overall Military - Active Duty; Overall Military - Retired/Veteran; Overall First Responder — Police/Law Enforcement; Overall First Responder — Fire/EMS. The sprint-distance event will also feature three categories for Paratriathlon Military and Paratriathlon First Responders: Ambulatory, Wheelchair and Visually Impaired.

Eligible athletes can register starting Friday, Feb. 19, at noon CST (1 p.m. EST) at leonstriathlon.com. The event does not require qualification.

"USA Triathlon is proud to recognize, honor and support our nation's military and first responders through our first-ever USA Triathlon Military and First Responder National Championships," said Rocky Harris, USA Triathlon CEO. "Leon's Triathlon will be an incredible host for this event. Participants and spectators alike will be in awe of the race's commitment to celebrating and empowering these populations, while offering a world-class course and convenient spectating. Current and aspiring triathletes with military and first responder backgrounds, including paratriathletes, are encouraged to participate in what is sure to be an inspiring and impactful event."

Founded in 1983 by Leon Wolek, Leon's Triathlon has a long history of military multisport competition. In 1995, Leon's Triathlon hosted the world's first Military Championship, which was a qualifier for the inaugural 1995 Military World Games in Rome. Leon's Triathlon also hosted the 2015 U.S. Armed Forces Triathlon Championship and continues to work closely with Armed Forces Sports. In addition, the race served as the USA Triathlon Age Group National Championships — USA Triathlon's largest and longest-running National Championships event — in 1992 and 1993.

The event has long offered special first responder and military competitions, including paratriathlon categories, and the Dare2Tri Paratriathlon Club's injured military camp has been held in conjunction with race weekend since 2015. Given the camp's strong history, Dare2tri will also host a paratriathlon coaching certification course over the 2021 race weekend. Leon's Triathlon partners with a variety of other local, state and national initiatives and organizations throughout the year to recognize and give back to military and first responders.



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"We are extremely humbled, grateful and honored to serve the fine women and men of the military and first responders of America," Leon Wolek, Founder of Leon's Triathlon, said. "Without their services, all of the sports we enjoy every day would not be possible. We look forward to welcoming participants and their families to the crossroads of America next summer and showcasing our Hoosier hospitality."

Military pageantry is interwoven throughout Leon's Triathlon event weekend. The pre-race program typically features a moving tribute to America's military, flag presentations, flyovers, jump teams, three volley salutes and a massive 30- by 60-foot display flag. The event venue is decorated by Army Reservists and veterans with more than 1,000 American flags, started by Marine reservist and patriot Larry "Flagman" Eckhardt. Indiana Fallen Heroes placards adorn the venue with "Never Forgotten" images from Gold Star Families. An Honor Guard procession is held on race morning to escort injured military athletes from their host hotel to the venue.

The 2021 event will be held with stringent COVID-19 safety precautions in place according to State of Indiana guidelines and USA Triathlon's [Safe Return to Multisport](#) initiative. Race capacity and spectator access will be limited. Athletes may experience temperature checks, face coverings, reduced touchpoints and increased disinfecting practices. Exact details will be communicated in advance of race weekend.

Leon's Triathlon will also serve as the 2021 USA Triathlon Indiana State Championships and North Central Regional Paratriathlon Special Qualifier, which qualifies athletes for the 2021 Toyota USA Paratriathlon National Championships.

For more information about the inaugural USA Triathlon Military and First Responder National Championships, [click here](#). To view the complete 2021 USA Triathlon National Championships calendar, visit usatriathlon.org/nationalchampionships.

About USA Triathlon

USA Triathlon is proud to serve as the National Governing Body for triathlon, as well as duathlon, aquathlon, aquabike, winter triathlon, off-road triathlon and paratriathlon in the United States. Founded in 1982, USA Triathlon sanctions more than 4,300 events and connects with more than 400,000 members each year, making it the largest multisport organization in the world. In addition to its work at the grassroots level with athletes, coaches, and race directors — as well as the USA Triathlon Foundation — USA Triathlon provides leadership and support to elite athletes competing at international events, including World Triathlon Championships, Pan American Games and the Olympic and Paralympic Games. USA Triathlon is a proud member of World Triathlon and the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC).

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