

Eleven Army boxers advance to Armed Forces final

ESAU LOLIS

Army News Service

FORT HUACHUCA, Ariz. – More than 1,800 spectators witnessed 29 boxers from across the Army contend for the All-Army Boxing Championship at Fort Huachuca's Barnes Field House Jan. 20 and 21.

Returning to this year's boxing competition was 2005 Conseil de International Sports Militaire light-heavyweight bronze medalist Staff Sgt. Christopher Downs of Fort Carson, Colo., and the 2004 light-middleweight gold medalist 1st Lt. Boyd Melson. Both won gold at Huachuca as boxing enthusiasts enjoyed free admission for the 16 bouts over two nights.

Downs won gold at the Armed Forces Boxing Championships last year and nabbed a Bronze Medal at the U.S. Amateur Boxing Nationals last March.

Downs won the 2006 All-Army light-heavyweight gold medal by way of referee stopping the contest due to head injury. At the beginning of round one, Downs threw a series of powerful blows to the head of Spc. Tremaine Knox of Fort Riley, Kan., sending him to the canvas. The referee stopped the contest after only 29 seconds of the first round.

Former CISM gold medalist and three-time All-Army champion 1st Lt. Boyd Melson won the light-middleweight gold medal and moved forward in his quest to the 2006 CISM championship by defeating Spc. Jonathan Conn by referee stopping the contest.

Shortly into the third round, Melson threw a lightning-fast combination dazing

Conn, and causing his nose to bleed and sending him into a dizzying standing eight count. The referee stopped the contest and declared Melson the victor.

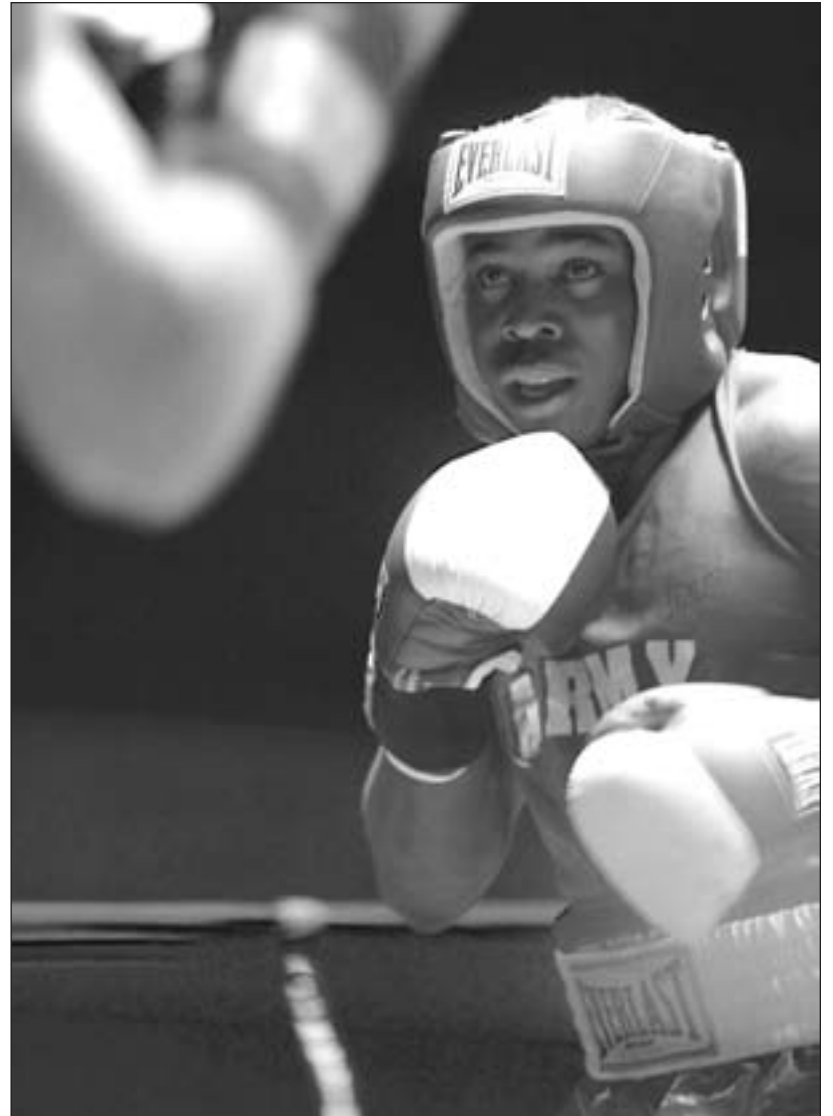
Unopposed boxers Spc. John Franklin and Sgt. Jose Jimenez fought a match bout. Franklin won the bout by outpointing Jimenez 33 to 13.

Jimenez, who returned from Iraq just three weeks ago, described his advancement to the All Army Boxing Championship saying, "it was a long time coming." Jimenez competed in 2002 but did not place.

In a battle of Army heavyweight superstars, defending All-Army champion Sgt. Joe Guzman of Fort Carson, Colo., faced off against Spc. Jeffrey Spencer of Fort Hood, Texas during the final bout of the night.

Both boxers were evenly matched, blow for blow during the first two rounds. The Guzman onslaught began in round three. The bell rang to begin the final round and Guzman came out swinging with an array of scoring blows to Spencer's torso. The referee stopped the bout twice to warn Guzman. Guzman nearly dropped Spencer but Spencer fought back bravely.

The crowd went wild as the competition came down to the last 10 seconds. Once the bout was over, the crowd eagerly anticipated the judge's decision. Guzman was named champion out-pointing Spencer by just three points 27-30. Guzman was awarded the 2006 All-Army heavyweight gold medal.



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Spc. Quentin McCoy, Fort Carson, Colo., moves in on his opponent, Spc. Joshua Kidwell, Fort Bliss, on the first night of All-Army boxing, Jan. 20. McCoy outpointed Kidwell 34-14.

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