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**US ARMY RESERVE SOLDIER WINS BRONZE MEDAL IN MEN'S POLE VAULT
AT 2016 OLYMPIC GAMES**

RIO DE JANEIRO – Army Reserve 2nd Lt. Sam Kendricks earned the bronze medal during the men's pole vault final at his first-ever Olympic competition with a jump of nineteen feet and two inches.

Thiago Braz da Silva (Brazil) won the gold medal, and current world record holder Renaud Lavillenie (France) took silver medal honors.

Kendricks came a long way last night as an accomplished soldier-athlete from a small Mississippi town. Excelling as a track and field athlete throughout high school, his military and pole vaulting careers took off as a freshman at the University of Mississippi. He joined Ole Miss' ROTC program to earn money for tuition, enjoying continued success as a pole vaulter on the school's track team. Kendricks also won NCAA championships in 2013 and 2014 while breaking the university's indoor pole vault record.

He began his rise to global prominence at the 2015 World Championships in Beijing, placing ninth in the finals.

Kendricks set an Olympics trials record during the 2016 World Indoor Championships, taking first place in the men's pole vault at the U.S. Olympic track and field trials in Eugene, Ore., securing a spot on Team USA. His best jump this season was 19 feet and five inches — second only to 2012 gold medal winner Lavillenie, who set the current world pole vaulting record in 2012 with a height of 20 feet and three inches.

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