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Army assigns University of Montana graduate to U.S. luge team

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The Department of the Army has assigned a 1969 University of Montana alumnus to the 1970 National Luge Team, according to Col. Walter A. Pashley Jr., chairman of the UM Military Science Department.

Named to the team recently was 2nd Lt. James D. Murray, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ray P. Murray, who live at Avon, west of Helena.

A UM education major, Lt. Murray also was a student in the Army ROTC program while at the University. He was commissioned second lieutenant in the Army Field Artillery upon graduation. He was graduated from Powell County High School, Deer Lodge, Mont., in 1964.

Lt. Murray was in the 1968 Winter Olympics at Grenoble, France, as a member of the U.S. Luge Team. Upon completion of officers' basic field artillery school last month, he was assigned by the Army to the National Luge Team.

He visited the UM Army ROTC department recently and is en route to Europe, where he will train with the U.S. Luge Team at Hammarstrand, Sweden; Koenigsee, Germany, and Imst, Austria.

The team will be preparing for the World Championship Luge Races, to be held in February at Berchesgarten, Germany. Lt. Murray will return with the luge team to the U.S. to compete in the Kennedy Memorial Games at Lake Placid, N.Y., in late February. He will then begin preparations with the team for the 1972 Winter Olympics, to be held at Sapparo, Japan.

While at UM, Lt. Murray was the commander of the Army ROTC's Silvertip Rifles Drill Team and president of the University's Luge Club.

He became interested in lugging at the University in 1965 and has since developed the skills which led to his entry in the 1968 Olympics and his present luge assignment.

Luge consists of one- and two-man teams riding a small two-runner sled down sloped 1,000 to 1,300-meter curved trails. Total time of four such runs is the basis for determining the winner. An average time for one run of 1,300 meters is about 40 to 50 seconds, Lt. Murray said.