

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**More than 500 Veterans Expected to Register for  
19th National Veterans Golden Age Games!**

*U.S. Competition Offers Volunteer and Sponsorship Opportunities*

Oklahoma City -- Registration has opened for the 19<sup>th</sup> National Veterans Golden Age Games, coming to Oklahoma for the first time this May. The 2005 Games are expected to draw nearly 500 participants, making them the nation's largest annual senior sports event for military veterans age 55 and older.

The Games, which began as a way of providing therapeutic recreation to older veterans, are attracting increasing numbers of participants each year. Competitions begin May 21 and run through May 26. All veterans registered for care at any VA medical facility are eligible to compete.

The National Veterans Golden Age Games are co-sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Veterans Canteen Service, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Ladies Auxiliary. The Oklahoma City VA Medical Center will host the 2005 event.

Most of the fourteen competitive events will be held at the University of Oklahoma in Norman. Events include swimming, bicycling, croquet, discus, shot put, table tennis, air guns, golf, nine-ball, bowling, horseshoes, shuffleboard, checkers and dominoes. The veterans compete in ambulatory, wheelchair and visually impaired divisions, in specific age groups. Many of the competitors are veterans of World War II and the Korean War, but the number of Vietnam era veterans is increasing every year.

In addition to the event venues on the University campus, the competitive golf event will be held at the Jimmie Austin OU Golf Course, and bowling will be at the Sooner Bowling Center and Norman Lanes. Nine-ball will take place at Coaches Restaurant and Brewery in Norman.

Opening ceremonies for the 2005 Games will be held at the Gaylord Family Oklahoma Memorial Stadium on Saturday, May 21 at 7:00 p.m. Closing ceremonies will be at the Lloyd Noble Center on Thursday, May 26 at 7:00 p.m. The public is welcome to attend all competitive events and ceremonies. Admission is free.

*-More-*

## 19<sup>th</sup> National Veterans Golden Age Games 2/2/2/2

Employees at the Oklahoma City VA Medical Center staff and Oklahoma University have planned a week full of Oklahoma tourism, entertainment and recreation for the competing veterans. When they are not testing their mettle at the events, the visiting veterans will see a Redhawks baseball game, watch the horses at Remington Park, and tour area attractions such as the Cowboy Hall of Fame and the Oklahoma City Memorial, as well as casinos, wineries and museums.

The theme for the 19<sup>th</sup> National Veterans Golden Age Games, "Sooner Gold," reflects the host state for the 2005 competitions while recognizing the competitors' quest for first place. "We are proud to be hosting the National Veterans Golden Age Games this year," said Steven J. Gentling, Director of the Oklahoma City VA Medical Center. "The competitors in these events remind us all that exercise, fitness and fellowship are important for every one of us. They inspire every spectator as they demonstrate the visible benefits of living a healthy and active life. Our employees are working hard to provide these competitors with a memorable and rewarding week in Oklahoma."

Local sponsorship of the Games is being accepted from area businesses and professional groups. Also, more than 1,000 volunteers are needed to assist with a full range of exciting activities throughout this year's Games. Information about sponsorship opportunities, volunteer registration and the planned schedule of events is available by calling Celia Pinkson at the VA Medical Center, at (405) 270-5162.

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