



# NATIONAL VETERANS GOLDEN AGE GAMES

## Competitor Profile (National)

### Walter Evans Jr. – Competing is a Dream Come True

Walter Evans Jr., an Army and Marine Corps combat veteran of the Vietnam War, will have a special reason to celebrate his upcoming 60<sup>th</sup> birthday on August 27, 2007 – he'll be in the midst of stiff competition at the National Veterans Golden Age Games in Houston, Texas.

Competing in the event for the second time, he's proud of his accomplishments at the Games, returning home to Lumberton, N.C. last year with two gold medals in swimming and a silver in the discus event. "Competing in the Games keeps me motivated," Evans said. "This is something I really look forward to, and the closer it gets to the Games, the more motivated I become."

Evans, who served in the engineer corps during his 1968-1970 Army tour in Vietnam, also served briefly in the Marine Corps and later worked at an adhesive manufacturing company for nearly 20 years. In 1999, while working on a barn, he fell to the ground and severed his spinal cord. He now uses a wheelchair for mobility, able to walk for only a short distance. The injury hasn't kept him from training or competing in the Games, however. Evans says that he now lifts weights, plays basketball and shoots pool back home to get himself ready for the competition. "I am more active now than before I was hurt," he says. "I am doing things now that I never did before I was in a wheelchair. I like that."

In addition to the competition, Evans also enjoys the opportunity to meet other veterans at the National Veterans Golden Age Games. "I like having a chance to win some medals, but I also have fun at these events and have met a lot of new people. I've made a lot of friends there."

Walter Evans Jr. may need a wheelchair most of the time, but that doesn't mean he is one to sit still. He also competes in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, returning from that event this past June with one gold and two silver medals. In the late winter, he also participates in the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, where he skis the Rocky Mountains using a bi-ski, an adapted ski device for sit-down skiers. "I never thought I would be able to take part in these sports," Evans says. "This is really a dream come true."

