



# NATIONAL VETERANS GOLDEN AGE GAMES

## Competitor Profile (Local)

### John Holt – Vietnam Veteran Reconnects with Army Buddies

For 61-year-old Army veteran John Holt, going to the National Veterans Golden Age Games is becoming a yearly, week-long tradition. This will mark his fourth year participating and he is already training to win some medals.

Since he is part of the hometown Houston Silver Eagles team, the 2007 Games hold special meaning. "My family will be here rooting me on," said Holt. "My grandson said 'Pappy, you always come to all our games, we'll definitely be there for your's.'" Having his family on the sidelines has given Holt an extra incentive to train for the upcoming events. "It makes me want to win a gold," he said.

His family, which includes his wife, three brothers, daughter and three grandchildren, are all volunteering at the Games taking place August 27-31. Holt is competing in dominoes, air rifles, shot-put and discus.

Holt heard about the Golden Age Games while volunteering at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston some time ago, and he decided to take a chance and participate. [The Houston VA facility is hosting the event this year.] "I like to play dominoes with the patients at the medical center," Holt said. "It was my way of giving back for what the VA did for me."

After being shot in the leg during an ambush attack in Vietnam in 1967, Holt did not know if he would ever see any of his fellow 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Army buddies ever again. At last year's event in Hampton, Va., he saw another participant proudly wearing a 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division hat. "I hadn't seen him in over 40 years," Holt said. "But, that is exactly one of the reasons I participate in these Games – to network and visit with fellow veterans."

John Holt credits the Department of Veterans Affairs for organizing the event. "I'd like to thank the VA for letting us participate, because it's a week I don't have to deal with any stress. I can just go and have fun," he said. Holt will join about 600 other veterans at the 2007 event who feel the same way.

