



## **Athlete Profile (Alaska)**

### **Tracy Durant – Army Veteran at Home in Anchorage**

Tracy Durant, of Anchorage, Alaska is competing in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games this year for the first time ever. Unlike most of the other 560 veterans who have signed up to compete however, he won't have to travel very far to get there. The 26<sup>th</sup> annual event is taking place right in Anchorage, the only time the Games have been held in the state of Alaska.

In fact, Durant said that one reason he chose to compete in the Games this year is because it is taking place so close to home, a key reason that nine of Alaska's 14 athletes are also competing in the Games for the first time. Because Durant stays quite busy with his two kids and finding the time to train can be a challenge for him, the fact that the Games did not require travel this year really helped his ability to participate.

Durant, 44, was an E4 in the United States Army, serving a total of 14 years in the military, including the Army Reserve and the National Guard. In 1990, he was injured in an automobile accident when he was thrown from a car the distance of a football field. The accident resulted in a spinal cord injury and he has used a wheelchair ever since. He will compete in the Games as a Class II (paraplegic) in the novice division.

At the Wheelchair Games, Durant has signed up to compete in air guns, the power chair 220, the motorized wheelchair rally and the motorized slalom, and he is considering adding power soccer to the list. He is most excited about the air guns and the motor rally events, but thinks that the obstacles presented for the wheelchair slalom will be particularly interesting. (The slalom tests the competitors' skill, speed and strength around a challenging obstacle course, specially designed for each level of injury.) When he does compete, both children and his sister will be nearby cheering him on.

In 1989, Durant left Alaska but moved back to Anchorage in 2002.