

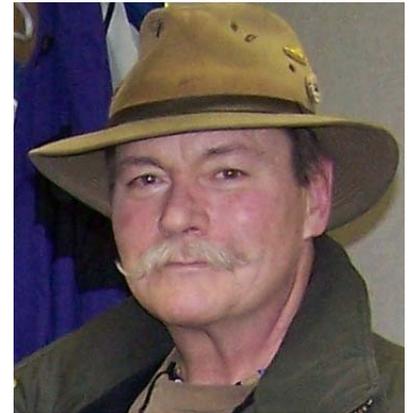


## Alaska Athlete Profile

### Kevin Fouts – First Time at the Games

Kevin Fouts is a U.S. Army veteran from Eagle River, Alaska. Born in 1950, Fouts was raised in an Air Force family and moved often, living at Fairchild Air Force Base in Washington; Fairborn, Ohio; Wiesbaden, Germany; and Laramie, Wyoming while growing up.

Following two years of college in Nebraska, Fouts enlisted with an artillery option in 1971, wanting to serve in the same war as his Dad. While serving with a 155mm Howitzer unit, Fouts' back was crushed during a training exercise at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Although he underwent three surgeries, his back continued to deteriorate. Beginning in 2000, he required a wheelchair for anything longer than short, very painful attempts at walking.



Before he moved to Alaska with his family in 1993, Fouts visited the state twice for fishing and hunting trips. In the process, he caught the "Alaska Fever." Adding to the intrigue was his eventual realization that he was no longer at the top of the food chain having a sizable bear population live so close to home. Another reason he loves the area is its beauty, be it the majestic mountains or the sight of bald eagles, along with the people and the independence he finds here.

Prior to being injured, Fouts lettered in high school swimming, loved to hunt and also enjoyed artwork. With the National Veterans Wheelchair Games coming to Alaska this July, he hopes to start enjoying sports once again. Without the persistent encouragement of the medical staff at the Anchorage VA Healthcare System and the "wonderful nagging" of local team coach Bill Campbell, he doubts he would be stretching his boundaries now. At the Games, Fouts has signed up for air guns and swimming, even though he hasn't raced in a pool in decades. Never having previously competed in wheelchair sports, the Games are providing new motivation for Fouts to get out of the house and become more active.

Fouts encourages other Alaskans to come watch the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. He feels strongly that it is important people know about the Games, which "show not only the potential of disabled American veterans, but also the potential of all disabled Americans." Having the Games in Alaska is special, according to Fouts, as it will give veterans from the other states, Puerto Rico and Great Britain a chance to experience Alaska. Kevin Fouts has sound advice for those coming to the Games. "Save your money in two coffee cans because you will come back." Take it from Fouts, who knows.