

National Veterans Wheelchair Games



Athlete Profile (National)

Terral Ramirez – One Big Extended Family

Terral Ramirez, 56, a combat-wounded Vietnam veteran from Moss Point, Mississippi, is attending his third National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Milwaukee this June. When asked why he is returning to the event for the third year, Ramirez puts it simply. "It's a lot of fun and rewarding," he said. "I really enjoy meeting up with the friends I have made at the Games and through the Paralyzed Veterans of American (PVA). We are one big extended family – the camaraderie that we share is unique and wonderful."



Ramirez was introduced to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games through his local PVA chapter. "By competing in the Games, PVA representatives told me that it would help with my rehabilitation," he said. "So I packed my bags and went to the Games in San Antonio, Texas, in 2000 and I'm so glad I did. By pushing myself physically to compete, it helped with my rehabilitation as a double amputee." Ramirez also attended the event in Minneapolis, Minn.

Since he began competing in the Games, Ramirez has joined a bowling and basketball team back home. He also stays busy volunteering with local veterans service organizations and will soon be a driving instructor offering senior citizens a refresher course to improve driving skills. Ramirez also has a passion for movies and music, playing both guitar and keyboard.

At the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, veterans typically enjoy a special fellowship throughout the week-long event. For most participants, Ramirez included, the experience is priceless. "The journey of the Games is fantastic, no matter if you win a medal or not," he said. "It's fun to compete and it's fun to watch the other events. Everyone promises to do better the next time. However the outcome, you feel like your batteries have been recharged by attending the Games, your spirits are lifted and your energy has been boosted enough that it carries you through the year."

"The sincerity and good wishes that you receive from strangers is really remarkable," according to Ramirez. "The Games are soul cleansing for some, a next step on the rehab ladder for others, and for some, it is a large gathering of disabled vets getting together to raise a little cane." This year, Ramirez will compete in bowling, field events (including javelin, shot-put and discus) and softball. He is also signed up for trapshooting, one of this year's exhibition events. When he's not competing, he will undoubtedly be enjoying the camaraderie with his fellow vets, and if all goes well, raising some cane as well.