

# National Veterans Wheelchair Games



## Athlete Profile (National)

### Christopher Hull – Glad to be Alive!

Ask Christopher Hull why he is returning to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games to compete in 2008 and here's what he says, "My spirit is uplifted when I am with my fellow veterans. I have really looked forward to reconnecting with friends I met last year and making some new ones. Plus, I really love to compete."

Hull, 23, from Deland, Florida, was serving in the First Cavalry, Army Alpha Company 215, out of Fort Hood, Texas, when he was injured. Hull was on leave traveling home to Florida when the car he was riding in had a terrible crash. "Witnesses said the car rolled between eight to ten times," he said. "It was horrifying." Hull was admitted to an Army hospital for care. Doctors quickly discovered that during that crash, Hull sustained significant damage to his spine, rendering him a quadriplegic.

After his military discharge, Hull spent six months in physical rehabilitation at the James A. Haley VA Medical Center in Tampa. Describing his initial perception of his injuries, Hull said, "It never really hit me that I'd be in a chair the rest of my life." For him, the thoughts were more like, "What do I need to do today to make life as normal as possible?" Hull can't tell you why he hasn't really felt the depression and self pity that so many paralyzed people experience. He does know that he feels very fortunate to be alive and remains committed to living life to its fullest.

Hull explains why he is returning to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games for his second year of competition. "Between the hundreds of other paralyzed veterans who are so encouraging, and the thrill I get competing in my events, I love what this event does for us." This year, Hull will compete in several new events including quad rugby and archery, as well as nine-ball and air guns. He has also signed up for the sled hockey exhibition. He is preparing for the challenge. "I have really been motivated to get into better health by participating in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games," Hull said. "Over the winter, I hired a personal trainer and have been training three days per week, and have also been on a serious diet. All in all, I have been doing really well and I'm feeling good."

To get ready for the 2008 National Veterans Wheelchair Games, being held in Omaha, Nebraska July 25-29, Hull practices archery at his family's property with the assistance of his faithful training partner, his mother, an archery instructor at a local summer camp. For both, learning new, adaptive approaches to a sport they enjoyed together for many years has been a rewarding experience. Although Hull has not yet played quad rugby, has watched the game and is enthralled by this vigorous, contact sport. "I've always wanted to play but there isn't a local team so this is my chance," he said. As a first-time wheelchair athlete at the 2007 National Veterans Wheelchair Games, Hull picked up two gold and two silver medals. His winning spirit, though, clearly merits another gold for returning competitor Christopher Hull.

