



Athlete Profile (National)

David Specking – Setting New Goals

David Specking, 46, a combat wounded veteran from Paragold, Arkansas, will be attending his first National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Omaha, Nebraska this July. Specking's Army career took him around the world including time in Israel, the invasion of Grenada, the Persian Gulf during Operation Desert Storm, and more recently his service during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Specking was involved in countless conflicts and missions during his twenty-three years of service with the Army. On August 20, 2004, his military career, and indeed his life, was changed forever. While taking over a mosque in the city of Najaf just south of Baghdad, Specking was seriously injured when he was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade round.

The effects of that accident resulted in a medical retirement from the Army and a change in how he approached his life in general. One unexpected change was his past perception of his father and how he views his father today. "My Dad served in the Korean War and was injured during his service too," said Specking. "My Dad's life was pretty rough. I see now some of the things that I do or how I handle things since my injury and I understand why he did the things he did. I see myself reacting and handling situations similar to him—he inspires me."

Specking says the two are very close and that his father will take care of things at home while he's attending the Games. "He might not be with me physically at the Games, but he'll be there in spirit," said Specking. "And you can bet he'll be calling me each day to see how I'm doing." Specking's wife, Ginger will attend the Games to cheer him on in person and she'll also represent the support of their eight-year-old daughter, Carissa and Specking's parents, Bernard and Wanda.

Specking, a quadriplegic, enjoyed competing in sporting events prior to his injury. "I talked to my providers at the Memphis VA Medical Center about missing the participation, camaraderie and sense of accomplishment that you experience when you compete in sports." said Specking. "Their answer to me was that there was no reason I couldn't continue to compete and they encouraged me to sign up for the Games."

Specking will compete in weight lifting, 9-ball, shot put, and the javelin. "I'm really anxious to compete in the events I've signed up for and I'm looking forward to watching other events and learning more," said Specking. He believes the Games will expose him to a whole new world of competition and open him up to new options. "I hope to come away from the Games with a new set of goals," said Specking.