



Athlete Profile (International)

Edwin Thomas – Moving & Motivating

Edwin Thomas of Falmouth, Cornwall, England, has many hobbies. When he's not reading or building model sailing ships, he can be found spending quality time with his entourage of adoring fans, his grandchildren—all nine of them. They have plenty to be proud of when it comes to their 59-year-old grandfather. Thomas, a paraplegic, has earned numerous honors from participating in events at previous National Veterans Wheelchair Games, including two silver medals in 2007. He is the chairman of the British team BEWSA, which stands for British Ex-Services Wheelchair Sports Association. Each year, members of BEWSA compete in the Wheelchair Games, as well as other wheelchair sports events in Great Britain.



“The British team travels so far because we all want to, we all look forward to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games and have to prove our worth to be on this team,” said Thomas. “There has always been a special relationship between our armed forces, and most of us have worked with our U.S. counterparts at some time during our service lives. As disabled veterans, we are just reinforcing that relationship and will continue to do so for as long as we are able.” Thomas has been involved with BEWSA for 16 years, serving as chairman for the last 12.

Thomas' favorite competitive sports are the field events of shot-put, discus and javelin, but because of a shoulder injury he is unable to join in those events himself. For his 12th year at the Games, his roster will consist of archery with a compound bow, manual chair bowling and air guns.

“During my 12 years of service in the Royal Navy, I always enjoyed shooting any kind of weapon,” Thomas said. Judging from the results of last year's competition, he's pretty good at it too – air guns is one of the sports in which he earned a silver medal, the other being bowling.

“There is life to be lived, be it from a wheelchair,” said Thomas, who was injured during operational duties while serving in Borneo in the Far East. “I have benefitted from the Games by the friendships I have made and the camaraderie I always experience during this event. They have taught me that being in a wheelchair is not the end but a new beginning, with new experiences to master and enjoy. Participating in sports opens your eyes to a whole new world and new challenges.”