



National Disabled Veterans

# Winter Sports Clinic

---

## Skier Profile

### Dallas Chambless — Making History

Dallas Chambless is eager to hit the slopes again. The last time he skied was on a high school class trip in 2002. This year's snowy adventure will be a little different than his last one though, since the 23-year-old Texas native is now paralyzed from the waist down. An Army veteran who lives in Temple, Texas, Chambless claims that not much has changed since last year's motorcycle wreck. In fact, he insists that he will be speeding down black diamonds this April when he attends the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic for the first time.

It was in August 2002 that the recently graduated Chambless enlisted in the Army. Early the next year, he received his initial deployment orders for Iraq. "I was excited; I didn't know what to expect. I was looking forward to it. And the second time, it was like, OK...same ol' stuff," said Chambless. "I wish I could go back a third time. I miss being a soldier — I found joy in doing my job."

During his military service, Chambless received an Army Commendation Medal (ARCOM) with valor for combat under fire. ARCOMs are awarded to soldiers who distinguish themselves through acts of heroism, extraordinary achievement or meritorious service. Unfortunately, in 2006, just a year after his *second* return from Iraq, Chambless was in a life-changing motorcycle crash after being caught by an unexpected tail wind. His bike flew up in the air and he landed on his back, crushing his spinal cord. Chambless retired as a sergeant in August 2006 and receives treatment at the South Texas Veterans Health Care System in San Antonio.

The accident left the young veteran a paraplegic, but not without a fierce determination to lead a "normal life." Life in a wheelchair is not preventing this good-humored young man from achieving many of life's important milestones and he is currently preparing to move into his first house.

"Nothing has really changed since my injury, except now I shower sitting down," Chambless said. "But I do miss running. I was on the track team, the football team and the baseball team." The former high school athlete is willing to try anything to remain active in life. "This is my first time participating in the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic and I have looked forward to learning to ski again."

Skiing is not the only thing Dallas Chambless plans to "give another whirl." Starting this fall, he plans to hit the books again too. He will attend the University of Texas and earn his degree in education. Eventually, he hopes to teach history at the high school level. "It's not only my favorite subject," he explained. "I *made* history — so I might as well teach it." He will undoubtedly make history once again when he skis down the slopes of the Rocky Mountains this April — whether he gets to try those black diamond slopes this year or not.

*Miracles on a Mountainside!*



Department of Veterans Affairs



Disabled American Veterans