



National Disabled Veterans

# Winter Sports Clinic

## Skier Profile

### William White – Improvise, Adapt and Overcome

William White is not only a U.S. Marine Corps veteran but also a veteran of the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, participating this year for the ninth consecutive time. “I can’t hide my anticipation for this year’s Clinic,” he said. “This event encourages such positive rehabilitative changes in participants. It allows veterans to explore personal obstacles and teaches us to improvise, adapt and overcome.”

Growing up in Roselle, Ill., White, 44, was called to serve his country after high school. Joining the Marines, he served for nearly 12 years as a communications chief. He served in the Gulf War and various other global conflicts in Somalia, Kuwait and Nicaragua. “It was an honor to be among those who answered their country’s call to arms in battle,” he recalled. He was discharged in late 1995 and moved back to Illinois in 1997 to help his father.

White attended night school and later was admitted to an elite electricians union. Once accepted, he excelled in the union – a career which led to becoming an instructor. Then, in March 2000 while working on an electrical high line, White was electrocuted by 75,000 volts of electricity. “There was a bright orange flash and a loud hum, then silence,” he said. “I was still belted in, and my right hand was burnt and mummified. I knew then it was the end of my right hand. I couldn’t feel my right foot either.” White was air lifted to the Loyola burn center. Because of the severity of the burns, doctors amputated his right leg below the knee and his right arm above the elbow.

After his injury, White asked many questions and read lots of magazines about prosthetic devices. He was determined to build dexterity in his left hand and strengthen the rest of his body. Watching videos, he learned to operate his prosthetic arm and leg with ease. Only nine months after his accident, he took on the challenge of the Rocky Mountains. Although he was always athletic, skiing was a new sport for White. Some members of a physically challenged sports team that White had met at the VA medical center in Hines, prodded him to attend the Clinic. “The next thing I knew, they gave me a plane ticket and there I was, on the slopes, ready to learn.”

Since then, White has progressed. “My first year, I couldn’t get off the easiest slope. The following year, I only fell twice when I skied on the beginner runs. Now, I ski mostly all blue runs and a short black run once in a while.” Skiing at the Clinic prompted White to try new things, and he has since set ten world records as the first upright athlete to compete in a National North American Scottish Highland Heavy Athletics Decathlon. “I compete regularly as a regular upright athlete in the Master’s category, and I attend about four competitions a year,” White said proudly.

William White, who lives in Des Plaines, Ill., is ready to try some new things at this year’s National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. “This year, I’m going to change things up a bit and try some cross-country skiing,” he said. “The Clinic truly inspires me and builds my confidence. It gets those who don’t do much up and moving, It’s more than just skiing, it’s about living life to its fullest – with whatever disabilities you have to deal with.”



*Miracles on a Mountainside!*





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*[Above information provided by veteran.]*

*Miracles on a Mountainside!*



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