



National Disabled Veterans *Winter Sports Clinic*

Skier Profile

William White – A Decade of Inspiration

Ten years ago, William White tried skiing for the first time. He was 35 years old and a double amputee. “My first year, I couldn’t get off the easiest slope,” said White, now 44 and a Marine Corps veteran from Des Plaines, Ill. “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.”

Growing up in Roselle, Ill., White was called to serve his country after high school. He joined the Marines, where he was a communications chief for nearly 12 years. 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. Shortly thereafter, he returned to his home state of Illinois 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 magazines about prosthetic devices. He was determined to build dexterity in his left hand and strengthen the rest of his body. He watched instructional videos that taught him to operate his prosthetic arm and leg, and with practice he came to use them with ease. Only nine months after his accident, he took on the challenge of the Rocky Mountains for the first time at the Winter Sports Clinic. Skiing at the Clinic prompted White to try new things; 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.

A decade after his first time on the slopes, he continues to look forward to participating in the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic with renewed excitement. “I can’t hide my anticipation for this year’s Clinic,” he said. “This event encourages such positive rehabilitative changes in participants. It truly inspires me and builds my confidence. It’s more than just skiing—it’s about living life to its fullest, with whatever disabilities you have to deal with.” William White, Marine Corps veteran, double amputee and world class athlete, has conquered his mountains.



[Above information provided by veteran.]

Miracles on a Mountainside!

