



NATIONAL VETERANS GOLDEN AGE GAMES

Local Competitor Profile

James Milliken – A Combat-Injured Vietnam Veteran Swims for the Gold

“I get around pretty good,” says James Milliken, a double amputee who is participating in the National Veterans Golden Age Games in Indianapolis. Milliken has been around the world once over, traveling to compete in various athletic and sports events since the early 1970s.

Milliken was injured during combat in Vietnam, which resulted in him becoming a double amputee, but he refuses to allow his injuries to slow him down in life or in competition. He realized early in his rehabilitation that he needed to stay active and that competition would provide just the challenge and motivation for him to workout to gain the strength and agility he needed.



The workouts have certainly paid off for him. Milliken began participating in the National Amputee Association wheelchair sports and determined that, “swimming was my bag.” So much his niche, Milliken was chosen to represent the United States in the 1988 Paralympics in Seoul, Korea. He also competed in the 1990 World Games in the Netherlands and continues to compete in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games and the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. In total, this amazing veteran has competed 13 times in various cities across the world. Not one to boast, Milliken will only hesitantly reveal, after much coaxing, that he has close to 500 medals that speak to his athletic accomplishments.

Milliken not only excels in the athletic arena, he is also an active member of the South Bend community, where he has held various roles from Jaycees charter officer to service work at the local Disabled American Veterans chapter. He is also a proud grandfather to four grandsons and three daughters. He drew his inspiration for competing in this year’s Games from his youngest daughter, Katie Sisk, who works at the Indianapolis VA Medical Center and is one of the planners for the Games.

This year, Milliken is excited to meet some new friends and enjoy the camaraderie of it all. “It is now more of a social thing for me,” said Milliken, looking forward to another visit to the Games and another chance to see the many friends he has made, and making new ones, too!

