



# NATIONAL VETERANS GOLDEN AGE GAMES

## National Competitor Profile

### Roy Gantt – Korean War Combat Veteran in the Company of Heroes

Take one look around the National Veterans Golden Age Games and you'll see heroes in all forms, from all branches of military with service dating back to World War II. But few, if any, of these veterans consider themselves heroes.

"I don't consider myself a hero, in fact I doubt if you'll find anyone here who considers themselves a hero," said veteran Roy Gantt. "But you'll find a lot of people here who will point others out as heroes." And that's the way it is among these veterans who compete in the Games. "You can live or exist," said Gantt, a Korean War combat veteran from New Athens, Ill. "I choose to live."

"Living" for Gantt, who will be 73 years old at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Games in Indianapolis, Ind., August 20-24, 2008, involves competing at the highest level year after year and relishing time with family and old friends. He's a multiple gold-medal winner in events such as swimming, bowling and horseshoes. Despite a past with significant medical challenges, Gantt is jovial, thankful and loves his time at the Golden Age Games. His energy and athletic prowess are sure to shine as he prepares to make his thirteenth appearance at the Games



After spending two years in the Army, Gantt was discharged at 9 a.m. and then joined the Air Force by 11 a.m. on the same day. "I didn't have much of a home life and I wanted to serve my country," he recalls. However, disaster struck on April 11, 1953; when on a reconnaissance mission in Japan, his B-29 plane crashed. The impact broke most of the bones in his body, hospitalized him for six years and required that his right leg be amputated from the knee down. Gantt has used a prosthetic device for most his life and now uses a wheelchair for mobility.

Five years ago, Gantt was involved in a brushfire accident at his home that burned 85% of his body. In a coma for six weeks, Gantt once again proved his desire to "live" and willed himself to heal. Gantt competes at the Games year after year as a survivor.

Gantt keeps busy! His work-out schedule puts youngsters to shame as he swims, bowls, lifts weights and does aerobics three times a week. He embodies a competitive spirit and was recognized as the "George Gangi Most Inspirational Athlete" award winner for his athletic excellence, sportsmanship and spirit at the 2004 Games. An honor he says was the thrill of his life. "If you stay active physically even through your golden years, you'll enjoy life more," he says. It's a pleasure to watch Gantt compete year after year because he is the living definition of what it is to "live."

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