

National Veterans Wheelchair Games



Athlete Profile (National)

Anthony Bryant – A Return Trip to Alaska!

On vacation while visiting his family, 74-year-old Army veteran Anthony Bryant of Stockton, California, fell and broke his neck. He was immediately rushed to the VA medical center in Long Beach, where he received care in the spinal cord injury unit. Amazingly and despite being a paraplegic, Bryant now uses sports to continue his rehabilitation.



Bryant has competed in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games three times in the past and has brought home several medals in the process, including a gold (in the power chair 220) and a bronze (in bowling) from his events last year. Like many veterans who use wheelchairs and have signed up for the 2006 Games in Anchorage, Alaska, Bryant's hopes are high for this year's competition. He has always been an athlete though, competing on semi-pro baseball, basketball and football teams before his injury.

Bryant served in the 31st infantry division during the Korean War – which brings back memories of his last trip to Alaska. "On the way back from Korea following my service, our ship stopped in Alaska," he recalled. "Back then, we only saw Alaska from the ship. I am looking forward to seeing more of it this time around and definitely exploring the beautiful sites this state has to offer!"

For more than 500 veterans, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games represent an annual event that inspires, creates friendships and drives goals. This year, Bryant will compete in the motorized wheelchair rally, ramp bowling, power soccer, the motorized slalom and the power chair 220, a track event for competitors who used motorized wheelchairs. He is already anxious for future Games because it means he'll have a concrete goal in mind while training. "I just got a new handcycle," he explained. "I really hope to get good enough to compete with it in future years."

With a little hard work and a lot of Army spirit, Anthony Bryant and many other wheelchair athletes will accomplish their goals this summer. "The National Veterans Wheelchair Games are a great experience," he said. "Participating in these Games gives me the feeling that I can get up and go, and I love it."