

National Veterans Wheelchair Games



Athlete Profile (National)

Russell Worth – He Just Keeps Going!

Russell Worth hasn't been to Washington since he was stationed there during WW II, so he is particularly looking forward to this year's National Veterans Wheelchair Games taking place in Spokane in July. "I hope to see some of the things I've wanted to see that I didn't get the chance to when I was stationed there," says Worth, 84. "I never got that far out in Washington (Spokane), but I hear it's great apple country."

This will be Worth's 16th year attending the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Worth says, "Every year, I look forward to the competition, seeing a new city and the camaraderie of the event." A veteran of both the Navy and the Army Air Corps, Worth, 85, of Brown Deer, Wisconsin, had always been active in



softball and bowling prior to the injury he received in a 1991 car crash in St. Louis. The accident occurred while he was driving home from his job as a building inspector in University City, when the suspension unit on the rear of Worth's car snapped. After losing control of the vehicle, he was tossed from the driver's seat over a ten-foot embankment. Landing on the frozen ground, he broke all of his ribs as well as his back. He later moved back to his home town of Milwaukee to be closer to his family.

Since becoming a paraplegic some 18 years ago, Worth has tried parasailing and even learned to ski at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, which he has attended since 1993. He received a special award at last year's Clinic to recognize his determination, stamina and tremendous spirit.

Worth still lives in an apartment on his own and works out two days each week at the VA Medical Center in Milwaukee, where he receives care. He volunteers with the medical center's incentive therapy program and also serves as a peer counselor in its spinal cord injury unit, helping other veterans with similar injuries. As if that wasn't enough to keep a person busy, he also sits on the Board of Directors for the Wisconsin chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, co-presenter of the Games with the Department of Veterans Affairs. In his spare time, Worth enjoys watching his grandchildren, especially when they are playing softball and hardball.

Many of his fellow wheelchair athletes see Russell Worth as a true inspiration. Being the modest man that he is, though, he just puts it this way, "It is important to have a good attitude and keep busy."