



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 21, 2009

Birmingham Set to Host National Veterans Golden Age Games *23rd Year of VA-Sponsored Sporting Competition*

WASHINGTON – From California to New York, an estimated 700 “golden age” Veterans will travel to Birmingham, Ala., to compete June 1-5 in the world’s largest sports and recreational competition for senior Veterans.

The Golden Age Games are open to all U.S. military Veterans age 55 or older who receive care at a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facility. The games give participants the opportunity to compete in ambulatory, visually-impaired and wheelchair divisions, according to their ages. Events include swimming, bicycling, bowling, croquet, air rifle, golf, shuffleboard, horseshoes, discus and shot put.

The 23rd National Veterans Golden Age Games are co-sponsored by VA, Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV) and the Veterans Canteen Service (VCS). This year’s event is hosted by the VA medical center in Birmingham.

The games are designed to improve the quality of life for all older Veterans, including those with a wide range of abilities and disabilities. Through a partnership with the National Senior Games Association, a member of the U.S. Olympic Committee, the games serve as a qualifier for the National Senior Games held every other year.

“HHV is extremely pleased to continue its support of this wonderful therapeutic program,” said Mike Lynch, executive director of HHV. “The games continue to demonstrate VA’s commitment to offer programs that help Veteran patients in their health recovery and to send the message that Americans support their service to our country.”

“The Golden Age Games continue to grow every year, and the athletes who participate are testimony that the spirit of competition, camaraderie and commitment to an actively invigorating lifestyle. This spirit not only helps to prevent illness, it strengthens the hearts and rejuvenates the soul,” said Marilyn Iverson, director of the Veterans Canteen Service.

Golden Age Games 2/2/2/2

The majority of the competitive events for the Golden Age Games, including opening and closing ceremonies, will be held at the Birmingham Jefferson Convention Center. The opening ceremony will take place at 7 p.m. on Monday, June 1. The competition begins with golf on Tuesday, June 2, at 8 a.m., at Highland Golf Course. Closing ceremonies will be held at 7 p.m. on Friday, June 5, at the convention center.

For more information on the Golden Age Games, log onto the games Web site at www.Veteransgoldenagegames.va.gov, or call Jenny Tankersley Ballou, public affairs coordinator for the National Veterans Golden Age Games, at (757) 728-3450 or (757) 660-5239.

#

For the latest news releases and other information, visit VA on the Internet at

<http://www.va.gov/opa>.

To receive e-mail copies of news releases, subscribe to VA's list server at:

http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/opalist_listserv.cfm.