



## Athlete Profile (National)

**Gary Pearson**  
**Coast Guard Veteran**  
**56 years old**  
**Seattle, Washington**

When it comes to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, Gary Pearson is more than a Veteran of the Coast Guard, he's a Veteran of the Games, having participated since 1989. This year, Pearson is excited to help celebrate a milestone – the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Games.

Pearson was injured in an automobile accident 37 years ago and became a quadriplegic. His first experience with wheelchair competition was at National Wheelchair Athletic Association events where he has winning results – first locally, then regionally and finally nationally. Soon after, he became involved with Paralyzed Veterans of America and began his relationship with the National Veterans Wheelchair Games.

Last year's event was a highlight of Pearson's involvement with the Games, having taken place in his home state of Washington. As the key point of contact for the Northwest Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), he played an integral role in planning the 2009 event.

Though Pearson says he enjoyed having home field advantage last year, he is glad he can shift focus back to preparing for competition at this year's event in Denver.

In 2004, Pearson received the "Spirit of the Games Award," and became recognized by his peers as an example of all you can achieve as a disabled Veteran.

**"I love the National Veterans Wheelchair Games," said Pearson. "The event is always exciting, and it's something I look forward to every year."**

