



Carl Vinson VA Medical Center, 1826 Veterans Blvd., Dublin, GA 31021

News Release

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Dublin VA Honors Medalists from National Veterans Games

DUBLIN, Ga. – The Dublin VA recently honored its returning teams from the 40th National Veterans Golden Age Games in Tampa and the 45th National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG) in Detroit with a hallway parade and pep rally at the medical center. Together, the teams brought home a total of 37 medals and other accolades, including 18 gold medals.

Each year, Dublin VA sponsors a team to compete at the national events, providing transportation, lodging, and coaching support. Participants compete in a variety of events such as track and field, archery, air rifle, boccia, shot put, billiards, discus, softball, javelin, bowling, and wheelchair rugby. The premier event is a grueling wheelchair slalom race in which competitors negotiate a multitude of obstacles.

Hosted by the VA, the Golden Age Games was started in 1985 to encourage senior veterans to stay active and support their overall health goals by promoting a healthy spirit of competition among the veteran population.

The NVWG, an annual rehabilitation and wheelchair sports program co-sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Paralyzed Veterans of America, provides veterans with spinal cord injuries, amputations, multiple sclerosis, and other neurological injuries a forum to maintain active and healthy lifestyles through wheelchair recreation and sports competition. NVWG is intended to promote the highest quality of life among wheelchair-bound veterans by encouraging them to maintain a healthy sense of athletic competition.

Medical center director Chandra Miller praised the athletes, coaches, and medical support staff for representing the medical center at a high level of excellence and for modeling the outcomes VA seeks to help veterans with mobility challenges achieve.

“Our athletes did an amazing job!” Miller said. “It’s wonderful just to see them compete and stay active, but bringing home so many awards certainly is a testament to their competitive spirit. They went to Tampa and Detroit to win, and they did just that.”

Veterans Golden Age Games medalists and participants include:

- Dr. Kathleen McGowan, Navy: gold 800m run, gold 1500m run, silver 400m run, bronze pickle ball doubles, 4th place power walk, 4th place 200m run
- Toney Lattimore, Army: gold bowling, gold boccia doubles
- Joann Dickson-Smith, Public Health: gold bowling, silver boccia, silver cornhole
- Griffin Bonner, Navy: gold boccia, silver cornhole, 4th place bowling, 8th place air rifle
- Edwin Blitch, Army: gold boccia doubles, gold cornhole, gold boccia, gold horseshoes, bronze air rifle, 8th place air pistol

- Robert Wells, Army: participated in shuffleboard, power walk, javelin, air rifle

Wheelchair Games medalists and participants include:

- Wonzie Holmes, Army: gold boccia, gold motorized slalom, gold bowling, gold shot put, gold discus, gold javelin, silver nine ball
- Keith Thompson, Army: gold boccia, gold nine ball, silver motorized slalom, silver rally, silver corn hole, bronze table tennis
- Joann Dickson-Smith, Public Health: gold adaptive fitness, gold bowling, gold shot put, silver discus, silver rally
- Toney Lattimore, Army: bronze air pistol

The 2027 Veterans Golden Age Games will be in Cleveland with the 2027 Veterans Wheelchair games in Orlando.

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Photo credit: Allison Burnett

Photos:

- 1) National veterans games teams

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