



## Athlete Profile: Ryan Lindstrom

**U.S. Navy Veteran**  
**34 years old**  
**Brandon, Florida**

Brandon, FL resident and U.S. Navy Veteran Ryan Lindstrom is excited about competing with fellow Veterans during the 38<sup>th</sup> National Veterans Wheelchair games coming to Orlando July 30 to August 4.

A sense of family tradition, a desire to serve his country and the urge to travel across the world led Ryan Lindstrom to join the United States Navy. “I wanted to serve my country, and it was something family had done,” Lindstrom said. “My dad was Air Force during Vietnam; my grandfather was Navy during the Korean War; my great uncle was Navy during World War II.”

Training to work on Tomahawk missiles, Lindstrom’s Navy career abruptly ended when he was on his first leave. While driving his girlfriend home from a Homecoming event, Lindstrom fell asleep behind the wheel, waking only when the vehicle he was driving was sliding off of the road. Unable to get the truck under control, Lindstrom and his girlfriend rolled two-and-a-half times before the vehicle finally settles. Ryan had broken his neck at the low cervical nerves, C6 and C7.

While the Paralyzed Veterans of America helped Ryan work through his benefits paperwork and eventual discharge, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games struck a chord with him. Lindstrom recounts his first experience with the Games, “It’s really the first time you’re around that many people that are in chairs or disabled. You don’t feel like you’re out of place when you’re at the Veteran’s Games/ You kind of feel like you’re the one that’s in place and everyone that’s walking around is out of place.”

*“After years of going to the Games you really start to have friends and family big time there. And, every year you go back, it becomes a family that gets bigger and bigger and bigger.”*

- Ryan Lindstrom

