

The United States Blind Golf Association
is proud to recognize and induct
The Department of Veterans Affairs
into its inaugural 2007 class of the Hall of Fame



The history of blind golf and the relationship with the Department of Veterans Affairs can be traced back to the 1940s. As part of their rehabilitation, veterans from World War II were introduced to the game of golf at Avon Old Farms in Connecticut. Two members of the United States Blind Golf Association, who received their initiation into the game at Avon Old Farms, are part of the first class of inductees in the Hall of Fame.

Hines Blind Rehabilitation Center located outside Chicago, Illinois opened in 1948. This premier Department of Veterans Affairs facility for blind and vision impaired veterans included blind golf as one of its activities. Orientation Instructors from Avon Old Farms brought their blind golf experience to Hines when it opened. Russell Williams, the first Service Chief at Hines, embraced the idea of offering blind golf. For the next 20 years it was the only VA facility to have a blind golf program. 1948 was also an important year for the United States Blind Golf Association. The association was organized that year and included veterans who received their blind golf start thanks to the VA program.

Blind golf was made special every summer in the surrounding Chicago area by an organization founded in 1952, called the Golf Swing Club. The Golf Swing Club chapter of the United Volunteer Services was made up of ladies who volunteered to help coach and guide the veterans around the many golf courses each week. They enjoyed the hospitality of as many as 15 country clubs. The program continues on even to this day.

The Department of Veterans Affairs now has 9 blind rehabilitation centers that provide blind golf instruction and help when requested. It also supports the National Blinded Veterans Tee Tournament held in Iowa every year for veterans interested in recreational golf and instruction.

For over half a century Hines Blind Rehabilitation Center has been both a pioneer and supporter of blind golf. As the plate on the Hall of Fame trophy very appropriately reads: "Friend of the USBGA".