



NATIONAL VETERANS GOLDEN AGE GAMES

National Competitor Profile

Frank Renteria –2007 George Gangi Inspiration Award Recipient

Marine Corps veteran Frank Renteria proves that you can get up after you fall - literally. At the 2007 National Veterans Golden Age Games, one of his goals was to finish the bicycling race. But a major crash on the course, in which he later learned he had broken three ribs, nearly derailed in plans. Despite his scrapes, bruises and broken bones, Renteria got back on his bicycle and finished the race, earning a gold medal in the process. His determination and commitment earned him the 2007 George Ganji Inspiration Award.



Renteria entered the Navy in 1964, just two weeks after his 17th birthday. A short time later he found himself on the way to Vietnam. In 1967, he left the Navy and saw his life tumble into a downward spiral. He found himself partying more and working less, only maintaining a job long enough to sustain his lifestyle. “Luckily, I still had enough sense to say to myself, ‘I need to get out of here,’” he remembers. At age 29, 11 years after leaving the Navy, he enlisted in the Marine Corps. “It was the beginning of a new life for me,” he says. “The Marines changed my whole attitude.”

After his military service, Renteria enrolled at Fresno State University, working any job he could to pay for his schooling, from collecting aluminum cans to mowing lawns. He went on to make the Dean’s list, eventually earned his master’s degree in social work and won recognition as the Fresno County Social Worker of the Year. “It’s amazing what the Marines have done for me,” he says. Eventually, he went on to become a teacher and now serves as a college counselor at Fresno State University.

Frank Renteria loves the Golden Age Games, which he learned about in 2004 when they were held in Fresno. He was too late to register that year so he volunteered. After seeing the veterans compete and witnessing the camaraderie they shared, he knew he just had to be a part of it. He competed the following year and has been hooked ever since, consistently winning medals in bicycling and swimming.

“It’s a great feeling competing with other vets,” he says. “Just the effort some of them have to go through to compete is amazing. When I see an amputee pushing through, my bumps and bruises can’t even compare.” Seeing old friends and making new ones draw Renteria to the Games. “Sharing and caring with one another, that’s what it’s about.”

Watch for Renteria as he competes and hope that this Navy and Marine Corps veteran stays upright on his bicycle this year!

