



NATIONAL VETERANS GOLDEN AGE GAMES

National Competitor Profile

Martha Halcomb – Games Get Competitive Juices Flowing!

Martha Halcomb entered military service in 1943 – at a time when women were first being inducted into the Marine Corps. “They didn’t know where to put us, but we ended up going to boot camp at Camp Lejeune,” Halcomb recalls. After training, she became a propeller specialist and served as an aviation machinist mate, assigned for a time as an aircraft mechanic for a dive bomber. Halcomb is proud of her military service and for helping pioneer the title, “Woman Marine.” Honorably discharged in 1945, she married four years later and raised her family in southeast Michigan. She also worked in a variety of administrative positions over the next 26 years.

In 1977 after her husband’s death, Halcomb retired to Largo, Florida and later joined the Bay Pines VA Medical Center’s Golden Age Team. She competed in her first National Veterans Golden Age Games in 1995, and has returned from the event each year with a large selection of gold medals. “I think my biggest accomplishment was taking second place in air rifles – I was competing against the men,” she said. Halcomb is hoping to bring home a few more medals at the 2008 Games in Indianapolis this August.

Now 85, the feisty former sergeant retains her spirit of adventure. “This will be my 14th year competing,” Halcomb says proudly. “I truly look forward to the Games every year and I especially love seeing if there are any new women Marines attending the event.”

After returning to the workforce ten years ago, Halcomb got a job at a Florida security company. In 2005, she fell while she was working in the office. As a result of her injuries, she lost the use of her legs and now uses a wheelchair. Even that hasn’t deterred from competing, though. “Getting ready to compete in the Games helps keep my physically fit,” Halcomb says. “The competition is great for my physical recovery.”

At the 2008 National Veterans Golden Age Games, Halcomb plans to compete in the horseshoes, air rifles, shot-put and discus events – her four favorites. She has some novel ideas on training. “I really don’t have a place to practice but I try my best. I throw soup cans in the back yard to build up my strength. This event isn’t really about medals, though. It’s also about meeting new friends and renewing the acquaintances we’ve made at past Games.”

Martha Halcomb says, “Being involved in these Games keep me active and helps keep me young. I would tell other veterans that if they’re competitive and the juice is still in there, they can renew it just by competing in the Golden Age Games.”

