

Service Member Honoree – Jaime Manriquez



I'm a recent Air Force retiree successfully finishing 28 years of service. Military service no matter what branch has physical demands. Whether it be directly job related or standards that must be met; its just part of the job. For me I entered the service at an "older" age of 21. We had some minor fitness requirements and my job at that time had additional physical demands. Fast-forward about 15 years, being older and a bit beat up. I acquired a significant knee injury while on a humanitarian deployment to Panama. It was at the beginning of a two-week trip, we were in field conditions (tents in a horse pasture), and I exited a very large truck into a hole twisting my knee. My first thought was "that's going to hurt in the morning", sucked it up and continued the mission. After visiting the camp doctor, I was told it was a bad sprain, given some Advil and sent on my way, but I knew it was more than that.

On my return to the states, physical therapy and an MRI, I was told that I had completely snapped my left ACL and required knee surgery. I had this done and completed a months long recovery with the help of my wife. I attended physical therapy, trained harder to keep up with the fitness requirements and other job demands. Honestly some years were better than others. Over the course of time and many doctor visits I was told

that I had Osteoarthritis. I was okay, my knee still works and I could push through the stiffness and pain. But eventually this caught up with me and I re-injured my knee while training to pass my fitness test and had my second surgery to replace my left ACL.

Following the surgery while in recovery, my wife told me how defeated the surgeon appeared when he came out to let her know my status. He had not seen such a bad case of osteoarthritis in a person of my age (about 37) and he did not know if the surgery helped. He felt I needed a total knee replacement. Again I went through physical therapy, many provider visits and what I called "lube and oil change" to help the knee move better. I was basically bone on bone.

It became very challenging to meet different physical demands of the job and requirements over the following years and I finally had to make a choice I was not really prepared for, emotionally or financially. This had been my only career my whole adult life. So on 1 November 2015 I officially retired from the Air Force and finally realized, hey I have arthritis.

While every day presents its own challenges, I am striving towards making each day better and learning more about arthritis. I am honored to be this year's Service Member Honoree at the Vancouver Walk to Cure Arthritis.

To visit Jaime's fundraising page [click here!](#)