



RECOGNIZING
23 VETERANS

IN 2023

CHICAGO VETERANS
WWW.CHICAGOVETS.ORG

William Shehan

Nonprofit Founder

United States Army Veteran

Words of Wisdom:

Do what you can, when you can, with what's at hand with a giving heart.

William Shehan, raised by his missionary grandmother and having had the privilege of traveling to various parts of the world, learned to respect and appreciate diverse cultures. This early exposure instilled in him a lifelong commitment to service. As his grandmother grew older and could no longer provide the care and guidance he needed as a seventh-grader, William found himself under the care of Thornwell Home for Children.

During his time at Thornwell Home, he had the fortune of being mentored by an exceptional individual named Willie Rice. Under Willie's guidance, William developed a strong work ethic, a deep dedication to a mission, and unwavering loyalty to others.

At 18, William decided that the best way to continue serving others was by enlisting in the U.S. Army. He embarked on two tours on the DMZ in South Korea and was subsequently assigned to the 9th Infantry Division, where he was injured in the line of duty during the Gulf War.

In 1999, William entered the Jesse Brown VA hospital, taking the initial steps to address his battle with PTSD. Over the last 25 years, he has explored various modalities offered by the VA and even created a few of his own. In 2002, he initiated a program called Chess for Veterans, realizing that gaining control over the 64 squares on a chessboard could parallel veterans regaining control over their lives.

William founded No Salt Sailing with the goal of assisting veterans in learning how to sail and acquire seamanship skills. Beyond this, the program aims to provide veterans with a sense of mission, opportunities to develop new skill sets, and a welcoming community to return to. In the past year, William earned his U.S. Coast Guard Captain's license and US Sailing Instructor Credentials. He has also cultivated relationships with different harbors, marinas, and organizations within Chicago's maritime and veterans' communities, furthering his mission to support his fellow veterans.