

ADVISORY REPORT

Bi-Monthly Newsletter of UnityPoint Health - Trinity & the QC CVEB



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Trinity's Military Advisory Committee / CVEB Turns Eight



The first meeting of Trinity's Military Advisory Committee (MAC) occurred on April 19, 2016, with 11 people attending. Currently, there are 42 people who make up the considerable expertise on the board.



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The original scope of the committee was 1) projects related to UnityPoint Health - Trinity and its role in supporting the health care needs of military personnel, veterans, and families, and 2) to identify and implement additional services, and coordinate community resources that provide healthcare services to military personnel, Veterans, and families.

After being designated a Community Veterans Engagement Board in 2018, an honor bestowed by the U.S. Dept. of Veteran Affairs with the help of the Veterans Experience Office, the scope remained the same. A CVEB unites local community leaders and Veteran advocates around a common mission to improve outcomes in the Veteran community.

The 42 MAC / CVEB members represent the following organizations:

- UnityPoint Health Trinity
- UnityPoint at Home Hospice
- Robert Young Center
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
 - o Iowa City VA Health Care
 - Community Resource & Referral Center
 - Public Affairs
 - VA Medical Center
 - Suicide Prevention
 - Veterans Experience Office
 - Quad Cities Vet Center, East Moline
 - Rock Island National Cemetery
- Amentum
- American Red Cross
- Constellation, QC Generating Station
- Davenport Mayor
- Fontaine Consulting, LLC
- Getting Heroes Home
- Home Base IOWA
- Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs
- Illinois Department of Employment Security





- Illinois Joining Forces
- IowaWORKS
- Muscatine County Veterans Affairs
- NAMI Greater Mississippi Valley
- Pendulum Resources
- REBOOT Recovery of the Quad Cities / MyWingman, LLC
- Quad Cities Veterans Network
- Quad Cities Veterans Outreach Center
- Retired Veterans
- Rock Island Arsenal
 - o Army Sustainment Command
 - Woodsen Health Clinic
- Rock Island County Veterans Assist. Commission
- Scott County Veterans Affairs
- St. Ambrose University
 - Veteran Recruitment and Services
 - School of Social Work

Through the development of a three-year strategic plan, the Quad Cities CVEB has made great strides in accomplishing their mission: bring local community resources together to improve outcomes for Veterans and family members of service men and women, and their goal: support Veterans and their family so that no Veteran falls through the cracks.

Progress has been made in the areas of service provider training; resource development and connecting Veterans to social determinants of health; educating caregivers and the community on the challenges Veterans face; engaging Veterans directly to understand needs and linking them to resources; and ensuring the sustainability of the coalition. (continued on p. 3)



continued from p. 2 CVEB Members Speak to Success

CVEB members agree. Erica Meier, LCSW, MSW, CCM, Manager of Care Coordination, UnityPoint Health - Trinity said, "I joined the CVEB around 2017 with the goal to collaborate with key leaders in the VA system in an effort to improve access to care for our patients and community members.

"One of the first issues I elevated to the CVEB members was the ongoing issue we were experiencing in the hospital setting with the lack of transportation benefits for our Veterans in the ER and acute care settings and its impact on their ability to receive care at a VA facility. Through the work of the VA and members of the CVEB, limits to or lack of transportation coverage is no longer an obstacle for veterans to receive their care at the VA.

"I also appreciate the efforts the VA has made to assist and allow veterans to receive the care they need in their own community, helping reduce delays in care and increase positive outcomes for our local veterans."

Erica Meier



and employment goals.

Karen Abendroth



Karen Abendroth, LCSW, Coordinated Entry Specialist, Iowa City VA Health Care System, VA Community Resource and Referral Center says, "The Community Veterans Engagement Board has been passionate about helping Veterans. In my work with Veterans experiencing homelessness or housing instability, I have seen how the CVEB has helped local Veterans. The CVEB has been assisting Veterans riding the MetroLINK bus for free. Eliminating transportation as a barrier has allowed for Veterans to make solid progress on their housing

"At both VEACs (Veterans Experience Action Centers), Veterans with housing instability were referred to many services that they were not familiar with. Homeless staff was able to complete assessments and make warm handoffs directly to the resources that could assist."

MetroLINK's Veteran Accessibilty Program Big Success in First Year

Since its inception in November 2022, MetroLINK's Veterans Accessibility program has issued 250 I.D. cards to Veterans to ride free on Metro's fixed-route system and has provided 6,000 free rides. Trinity and the CVEB thank MetroLINK for providing this valuable service.

Veterans can qualify for free rides on Metro's fixed-route system by completing an application at Centre Station and provide one of the following documents: a) State of Illinois or Iowa issued driver's license carrying an official "Veteran" designation; b) Military Retirement Card with a photo; c) VA Medical ID card; or d) combination of a DD214 and valid State of Illinois or Iowa ID or Driver's License. The Veterans Accessibility Program eligibility and ID must be renewed every three years.

Trinity Partners with Rock Island Arsenal on Wellness Presentations

Trinity has enjoyed a long-time relationship with the Rock Island Arsenal, including providing wellness presentations to both military and civilian Arsenal staff. There are over 6,000 military, civilian and contractor personnel employed at the Arsenal, which is home to critical services for our Armed Forces.

Since 2017, Trinity health experts have provided over 60 presentations related to cancer, heart disease, diabetes nutrition, weight management, stroke, sleep apnea, advance directives, depression, alcohol use, healthy cooking, and exercise.

Working with Linda Ottman, Wellness Branch Chief, G-1, Resilience and Readiness (R2) Division, HQ, Army Sustainment Command, health and wellness-related topics for 2024 are already being planned. Eight presentations related to nutrition, colon cancer screening, blood pressure, stress and mindfulness, cholesterol, breast cancer, vaping and diabetes are scheduled with Trinity's Teresa Pangan, PhD, RDN.

K9 Veterans Day - March 13

Dogs have been part of military campaigns for centuries. During WWI, the U.S. military began to utilize dogs for message delivery between troops. With the creation of the United States K9 Corps on March 13, 1942, dogs were officially adopted into U.S. military ranks during WWII. The Army's Dogs for Defense program trained 10,000 dogs who were donated to the war effort by American families.

During the Vietnam War, about 5,000 military working dogs (MWDs) served in-country, and roughly 10,000 servicemen served as dog handlers. Scout dogs were reported to have saved about 10,000 lives. About 232 MWDs and 295 dog handlers were killed in action.

Terry Berg, a Quad Cities man featured in the Veterans History Project through St. Ambrose University, enlisted in the U.S. Air force in 1965 and served until 1969. He served in Vietnam with the 377th Combat Support Group stationed at Tan Son Nhut Air Base in South Vietnam. He saw combat on his second day. His job was to guard the airplanes. He was one of about 75 dog handler teams that patrolled each night.

His dog, Sarge, was assigned to him after Sarge's owner was killed in the first attack after Terry arrived on base. Sarge was a 130-pound German shepherd that patrolled the perimeter around the base with Terry. "It was a two-week fight," Berg said of the dog's adjustment to a new handler. "I wanted him to

work. He wanted to eat me. He used my arm as a hot dog. It was not fun, but we worked it out eventually." Sarge detected enemy snipers trying to creep up close to the base. He saved Terry's life more than once.

Terry worked at the Rock Island Arsenal for 24 years, retiring in 2003. He also joined the Scott County Sheriff Reserve in 1983, serving for more than 20 years. He was a life member of the Vietnam Veterans of America Quad Cities (IL) Chapter 776 where he was proud to serve on the honor guard. Terry died in 2013.

Terry Berg. No photo of Sarge was available.



Sarge had not been trained in the U.S.; he was trained in Vietnam to kill. So, he couldn't come home when the war was over. Was Sarge Berg's best friend? "Half a country is trying to kill you," he said. "Yes, he was my best friend."

https://veteranslegacy.sau.edu/veteran/terry-l-berg-2/

Breakfast Optimist Learns About Work of CVEB

The Breakfast Optimist Club in Moline hosted CVEB Co-Chair, Sherri Behr DeVrieze, at their Jan. 24 early morning meeting. They learned about Trinity's military advisory committee/CVEB structure, its objectives and goals, and results and impact of their work with Veterans, VEAC and other events. Thanks to Tom Reagan of Black Hawk College for the invitation. The Club has sponsored two CVEB events in the past.



Click the Facebook icon to follow the CVEB Facebook page.

Next Meeting for CVEB members is Apr. 18 at 8 a.m. We will meet in person at Trinity Rock Island boardroom.



The work of the CVEB is supported by the Trinity Health Foundation Military and Veteran Services Fund.

To donate visit <u>Trinity Health Foundation</u>, select Other under designation, write in Military Fund.

National Medal of Honor Day

Local connection to two MOH recipients

By Shervi Behr Delvieze

April 6, 2008 – a date that changed my life. It was a quiet and relaxing Sunday morning at home when I received the phone call that no parent of a military service member wants to receive. My son, Dillon Behr, had been shot in Afghanistan. It was such a helpless feeling to not be able to immediately go to him across the world. He was at Landstuhl Hospital in Germany receiving treatment for a devastating injury to his right hip; the bullet had blown off the head of the femur. He was in an induced coma. He had a second bullet wound to his arm and exploratory surgery was performed that revealed damage to his lower intestine from shrapnel.

It was six days before I was able to see Dillon, several weeks until he was healed enough to coherently discuss his harrowing experience, and months before I fully understood how heroically his Green Beret teammates had worked to keep my son from dying on a remote mountain in Afghanistan.

Two were especially heroic, not just in preserving the life of Sgt. First Class Dillon Behr but, ultimately, in ensuring that an entire team of Special Forces soldiers not only made it off that mountain alive but also prevailed, against all odds, in the Battle of Shok Valley, one of the single most epic battles in the War on Terror in Afghanistan.

Ron Shurer, II, and Matthew O. Williams were each subsequently awarded the Medal of Honor for their heroics. The reasons these two men were chosen for this highest military honor are detailed in the amazing accounts of that epic mission. I carry the impact of their actions in my mother of a warrior's heart.

Ronald J Shurer II | War on Terrorism (Afghanistan) | U.S. Army | Medal of Honor Recipient (cmohs.org)

<u>Matthew O Williams | War on Terrorism (Afghanistan) |</u>
<u>U.S. Army | Medal of Honor Recipient (cmohs.org)</u>

National Medal of Honor Day will be observed on Mon., March 25. Each branch of the military awards the Medal of Honor (MOH) to those who have



Matthew O. Williams and Ronald Shurer, II

distinguished themselves "conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity" above and beyond the call of duty. The MOH is awarded by Congress only to military members. National Medal of Honor Day is a time to remember the sacrifices of those in uniform who have earned this highest of military honors.

Ronald Shurer, II was a former U.S. Army Staff Sergeant who was awarded the MOH for his actions while serving as a senior medical sergeant with the Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha 3336.

Matthew Williams was a weapons sergeant also with Operational Detachment Alpha 3336 who also received the MOH. He led an assault element consisting of several American Soldiers and a larger Afghan commando force on the mission.

On April 6, 2008, the team was participating in a joint U.S.-Afghan raid designed to kill or capture Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the leader of Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin in the Shok Valley of Nuristan Province of Afghanistan. The team came under enemy machine gun, sniper, and rocket-propelled grenade fire, suffered several casualties, and became pinned down on the mountainside.

During the 7-hour battle, their Afghan interpreter, who had been with the team for five years, was killed and four members of the team received devasting injuries that seriously limited their ability to exit the battlefield. Dillon did not have a hip, John's leg was nearly severed, Luis had been shot in the ankle, and

Continued from page 5.

Scott's dominant arm was no longer usable. It is the actions of the team members that came after these injuries that is the story of heroism I spoke of.

Ron fought his way to the lead element and provided life-saving medical attention to Dillon, Luis, and John while over 50 danger-close bomb and rocket strikes were being delivered by Apache gunships to the village above them. He was under intense stress and pressure as the team was still taking fire all around them. Ron was hit in the helmet by a bullet that had first gone through Scott's arm which disoriented Ron for a short time.

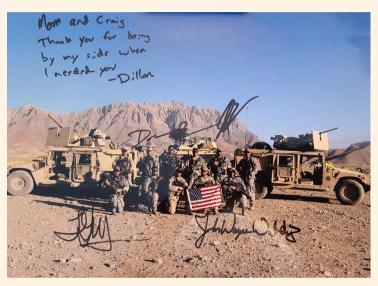
When the team was ready to evacuate the wounded, Ron helped John down the mountain while other team members helped Dillon and Luis. This was a harrowing journey for all involved. It was a steep route with loose soil and gravel, and chunks of rock were falling due to the air strikes above them. And they were still taking fire. There were huge drop-offs along the way requiring dropping or lowering the wounded. Utilizing a nylon cord he pulled from his cargo pants pocket, Ron and other soldiers lowered John from one ledge to another. At the collection point for injured at the bottom of the mountain, Ron continued working on all the men. At that time, he realized he had been shot in the arm.

To assist the lead element, Matt Williams gathered his Afghan Commandos, braved intense enemy fire, and led a counterattack across a 100-meter-long valley of ice-covered boulders. He and the Commandos provided suppressive fire to keep the insurgents from overrunning their position. After the team sergeant, Scott, received a devastating injury from a sniper round to his dominant arm, Matt provided first aid while still braving intense enemy fire, and moved him to the casualty collection point.

He then reached the lead element again, provided suppressive fire, and moved to the satellite radio to reestablish communications. Matt then helped the severely wounded down the mountain, while exposing himself to enemy fire. Matt then realized that the collection point for the wounded was in danger of being overrun by the insurgents. Matt, along with his Commandos, led another counterattack, fighting for several hours to protect

the team and wounded until helicopters could evacuate the wounded.

This day could have turned out differently if it were not for the actions of Ron, Matt, and the other team members who all played a role in keeping each other, including Dillon Behr, alive. Dillon said, "I wouldn't be here without them. They saved my life." All the injured men on the mission eventually recovered. Ten of them, including Dillon, Matt and Ron, received Silver Stars. Ron and Matt's Silver Stars were later upgraded to the Medal of Honor.



ODA 3336 In Afghanistan-photo signed by four of the seriously injured

Ron later became a Secret Service Agent, continuing to serve his country. Unfortunately, Ron Shurer was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer in 2017. On May 14, 2020, he died as a result of the disease at the age of 41. Matt Williams was promoted to sergeant major in 2020. He is still serving in the military.

Because of the actions of Ron and Matt and the other members of the team, my son survived and is leading a very successful and happy life. Because of them, I have two beautiful grandchildren. Dillon has a successful and rising career as Area Vice-President / Producer – Cyber and Executive Lines at Risk Placement Services, Inc. These men and this team will forever hold a dear place in my heart for ensuring that my son survived that day.







Meet New CVEB Member **Brian McDaniel**



Brian McDaniel is the Interim Regional Director, Service to the Armed Forces and International Services for the American Red Cross of Illinois. He is the interim replacement for Crystal Smith, who has taken a promotion within the American Red Cross.

McDaniel leads a team of over 100 Red Cross members who, in 2023, facilitated 8,700 emergency communications, financial assistance, and critical services for military families. Their work supports members of the Armed Forces in 88 counties across Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri, and around the Globe.

Prior to this role, Brian was the Executive Director of the American Red Cross of the Illinois River Valley, a chapter serving 1.1 million people in north-central Illinois. During his tenure, the Chapter had a strategic focus on the collection of life-saving blood, particularly with respect to Sickle Cell Disease. Brian is an instructor of International Humanitarian Law and trained in disaster public affairs for national relief operations.

Brian holds a Master of Science in Accountancy and an MBA in Supply Chain Management from Benedictine University. Brian, his wife, and their son live in Crest Hill.

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Upcoming Events/Meetings & Observances

March, Women's History Month

March 1, Muscatine Veterans Network, 4:30-8:30 p.m.,

Lee Agency, 2210 2nd Ave., Muscatine

March 3, Navy Reserve Birthday

March 5, Seebees Birthday

March 13, K9 Veterans Day

March 15, American Legion Birthday

March 21, Rosie the Riveter Day

March 21, QC Veterans Network, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Midwest

Ale Works, 587 12th Ave., East Moline

March 25, Medal of Honor Day

March 28, Vietnam War Remembrance Ceremony, 10

a.m., RI National Cemetery, Comm. Shelter 2.

March 28, Muscatine Veterans Network, 5:30-8:30 p.m., location TBD

March 29, National Vietnam War Veterans Day

April, Month of the Military Child

April 5, Gold Star Spouses Day

April 6, Run/Walk for Veterans 5K and 1-mile, hosted by

the QC Veterans Outreach Center, 8:30 a.m. American

Legion, Walcott, IA. Register

April 9, National Former POW Recognition Day

April 14, Air Force Reserve Birthday

April 17, Trauma REBOOT Recovery graduation

April 18, MAC/CVEB meeting for members, 8-9 a.m.,

Trinity Rock Island boardroom

April 18, QC Veterans Network, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

April 23, Army Reserve Birthday

April 25, Muscatine Veterans Network, 5:30-8:30 p.m.,

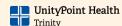
location TBD

April 30, National Military Brats Day

Member News

Command Sergeant Major (ret) Jim Spencer, 8-year member of the CVEB, was promoted in December to Human Resources Director at the Army Sustainment Command (ASC), Rock Island Arsenal. He previously served in positions at the ASC as Deputy Director HR; Chief, R2 and Integration DIV; and Chief, Wellness Division. He arrived at the ASC in 2012, becoming the top enlisted Soldier. He retired from the Army in 2015 after 30 years active duty.

The Advisory Report is a publication of UnityPoint Health - Trinity and the Quad Cities Community Veterans Engagement Board (CVEB) Editor: Sherri Behr DeVrieze, Military Program Coordinator and Co-Chair, QC CVEB





National Vietnam War Veterans Day

March 29 is a fitting choice for a day honoring Vietnam Veterans. March 29, 1973, was the day the United States Military Assistance Command in Vietnam was disestablished, and the last U.S. combat troops departed Vietnam. In addition, on and around this same day Hanoi released the last of its acknowledged prisoners of war.

The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration honors all veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces from November 1, 1955, to May 15, 1975, regardless of location, and their families. The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that in 2023 there were 5.6 million living Veterans who served during the Vietnam War era.

One such Veteran, Arlen Beck, is employed at UnityPoint Health - Trinity as a security officer. He served in the Marine Corps from 1968 to 1972 and in Vietnam from Dec. 1969 to Jun. 1971. He had at first enrolled at Colorado State University but soon realized that school was not where he needed to be. So, he enlisted in the Marine Corps instead.





"We did the job we were sent to do and we did it well." ~~ Arlen Beck

Arlen's father served in the Coast Guard in the South Pacific during WWII. He had an uncle who was career Army and another one who was in the first wave to hit Omaha Beach. Arlen felt a sense of patriotic obligation. In the Marines, Arlen attended special radio operator school. Upon graduation, he was given three choices for duty. His first choice was Vietnam, his second choice was Vietnam, his third choice was Vietnam. He got his first choice.

So, as a lance corporal, Arlen went to Vietnam as a special radio operator and was stationed at the Phu Bai Combat Base in northern South Vietnam. His job was to find and intercept enemy communications, such as troop locations and movements, tactical plans, and real-time information. These communications were then sent to code breakers and intelligence analysts.

He also had temporary assigned duty flying a couple missions with the Navy out of Danang. Because they had been designated as high value targets, they always had two fighter jets flying with them.

When describing Vietnam, Arlen said it was "Brutally hot, didn't smell too good, was humid, rainy, muddy, mosquito-infested, and actually cold at night during monsoon season. But there was also beauty in the South China Sea and its beaches and all of the shooting stars in the night sky. I didn't have it as rough as those in the bush." He also said, "I was absolutely bonded to the men I was there with. I was closer to them than with anyone before then or after."

When asked how he felt about his service in Vietnam, Arlen said, "I was proud to have done it, as was virtually everyone I served with. We did good things." He was promoted to corporal while in Vietnam.

After Vietnam, he continued in the same job with 2nd Radio Battalion at Camp Geiger, NC, and served in Guantanamo Bay for six months and in Morocco for six months. He was promoted to sergeant in July 1971 at Camp Lejeune.







Quad Cities VEAC Presentation at National Conference



Carmen Gamble, Data, Insights, and Analytics Division Chief, Veterans Experience Office, Department of Veterans Affairs, and James Wartski, Executive Director for the Community Veterans Experience Office in Washington, D.C., present a Quad Cities Veterans Experience Action Center t-shirt to U.S. Dept. Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough at the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs Midwinter Conference in February.

The Secretary of the VA's speech at the conference referenced the great work of the VEACs and how these events are life changing, as well as a front door for Veterans receiving the care and benefits they deserve.

"Great work of the Quad Cities CVEB! Jim and I were honored to present the SecVA with the QC CVEB VEAC t-shirt." ~~ Carmen Gamble, VEO

Free Training for Military Community Suicide Prevention



Robert Young Center Shares Resources at Stand Down

Robert Young Center Inpatient, Center for Alcohol and Drug Services (CADS), and Eastern Iowa Crisis System participated in the February 15 Quad Cities Bridging the Gap Stand Down for Veterans who are homeless or in need of other services. The three RYC groups shared resources with 26 Veterans at the American Legion Davenport Post 26.

Dr. Joanne McNeal, Clinical Nurse Educator for RYC Inpatient, and Veteran of the Army Nurse Corp Reserve Component, and Alex Meidinger shared information on how to access the various RYC services. Qualified Mental Health Professionals Mandy Lightfoot and Aubrey Cartwright with CADS shared resources on gambling addiction and passed out hygiene bags. Amy Gold, Care Coordinator Lead with Eastern Iowa Mental Health and Disability Services Region shared how to receive assistance during a crisis situation.

The Eastern Iowa MHDS Region is now in its 8th year of an Agreement with RYC to manage the Region's crisis system, which continues to be expanded and modified to meet the needs of the region.

Where to Go - Who to Call Eastern Iowa MHDS

Robert Young Center Resources

Veterans were provided other resources, as well, such as VA healthcare services, Quad Cities Vet Center, National Cemetery Administration, employment and housing services, and more. Free breakfast, lunch and haircuts were also provided.

The Illinois Dept. of Human Services is urging clinicians and healthcare workers to join the Illinois Governor's Challenge to prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans and their Families. By completing courses tailored to specific areas of interest and becoming familiar with Military Cultural Competencies, healthcare workers can help prevent suicide among our military community. The training portal can be accessed at Illinois SMVF (psycharmor.org). There are courses specific to healthcare workers, education/school staff, faith-based communities, first responders, mental health workers, community members, social services, Veteran service organizations, law enforcement, and criminal justice system workers.









