



TRIPLER ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

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Notable Former Soldier Drops by Tripler Army Medical Center

By Jan Clark, TAMC PAO
and Loran Doane, Garrison PAO

Tripler Army Medical Center-If it's true that actions speak louder than words, than retired Sgt. First Class Dana Bowman roared as he parachuted onto the grounds of Tripler Army Medical Center Aug. 19th to meet with members of the Warrior Transition Battalion and other Soldiers to prove that even becoming a double amputee doesn't end life, but instead, sends it on a new journey.

In 1994, high over the desert of Yuma, Arizona, the Army's elite skydiving demonstration team was practicing heart stopping aerial maneuvers that they've become famous for.

Bowman, a Special Forces Ranger, scuba diver and sniper, along with friend and fellow teammate, Sgt. Jose Aguillon would be performing the "Diamond Track," a maneuver which the two have performed well over 50 times before.

But on Feb. 6 of that year, Bowman's life changed forever.

While performing the maneuver, instead of crossing paths, Bowman and Aguillon collided at lightning speeds. Aguillon died on impact, and both of Bowman's legs were instantly amputated, above the knee and the other below the knee.

Amazingly, nine months after the tragedy Bowman reenlisted in the Army and insisted on skydiving into the ceremony, along with his commander.

On this bright Hawaiian day, Bowman descended onto TAMC grounds, bringing with him an American Flag, captain bars and ten commander coins.

He assisted Commanding General, Pacific Regional Medical Command and TAMC, Brig. Gen. Keith Gallagher in the promotion of 1st Lt. Regina Cantyne to captain and presented the ten commander coins to staff members chosen for their exceptional performance.

The jump was about the Soldier, the warrior in transition, and so only right that WTB Executive Officer, Maj. Percival Wolf, speak of the battalion's goal and introduce Bowman to those warriors in attendance.

“The WTB exists to assist our warriors, you, in transitioning back to duty, whether that is the National Guard, Reserve or Active Duty or into civilian life. Our only goal is to provide for you the care you need and the support to achieve your goals – to start you back onto the path you choose. Mr. Bowman is an example of what can be accomplished, Wolf said.

“Since retiring from the Army Mr. Bowman has received a bachelor’s degree in commercial aviation from the University of North Dakota and has become a noted international motivational speaker working with military and non-governmental agencies promoting the idea that “it’s not about the disability, it’s about the ability. We are fortunate and thankful to have him here with us today,” he said.

On behalf of the United States military men and women of all services, the coin I present to you is for all of you. It depicts a spade, which stand for the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard. On the opposite side are three shields; the Port Authority, the Police Department and the Fire Department. This coin and the American flag are for the men and women who have sacrificed for our country, Bowman said.

A full presentation followed in Tripler’s Kyser Auditorium, the theme “It’s not about the disabilities, it’s about the abilities”.

“The way I look at it is that we all have a disability. Your disabilities are those things that you think you can’t do,” said Bowoman.

Capt. Katherine Kalama, B Company commander, Bowman’s talk gave her a chance to look at disabilities from a different perspective. Even more, what you can do with your life if you put your whole heart and soul to something, how you can pretty much do anything, she said.

“In speaking with the WTs within my unit, they felt the same, repeating my sentiments that Mr. Bowman’s remarks gave them a positive outlook.”





