

BC3 again designated Military Friendly School

March 4, 2021



Air Force veteran Samuel Alden, 60, of New Castle, holds a commendation he received for saving the life of an Army paratrooper who was tangled outside a Lockheed C-130 Hercules aircraft 2,000 feet over Alaska in 1990. Alden, shown March 1 on BC3's main campus in Butler Township, earned an associate degree in history from BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing in New Castle in 2020. BC3 has been designated as a Military Friendly School for the sixth time since 2013 by Viqtry.

(Butler, PA) They chose to serve their country, transporting war materiel, paratroopers or American casualties on cargo planes traveling worldwide, securing the hangar at Andrews Air Force Base in preparation for the president to board Air Force One, or helping civilians who were helping to rebuild Iraq.

Veterans Samuel Alden, of New Castle; Allison Moyer, of Brockway; and David Pintell, of Butler, then chose Butler County Community College, where they – and other – BC3 student-veterans have been served, according to Viqtry.

The service-disabled, veteran-owned small business in Moon Township that assesses educational institutions nationwide has designated BC3 as a Military Friendly School for a sixth time since 2013.

Viqtory evaluates academic policies and compliance, admissions and orientation, culture and commitment, financial aid and assistance, graduation and career outcomes, and military student support and retention. BC3 exceeded benchmark standards in all six categories.

“This validates that we are truly military friendly, and how important it is that we treat our veterans with respect,” said Stella Smith, BC3’s veterans coordinator. “This shows that we do. This shows what we provide to them.”

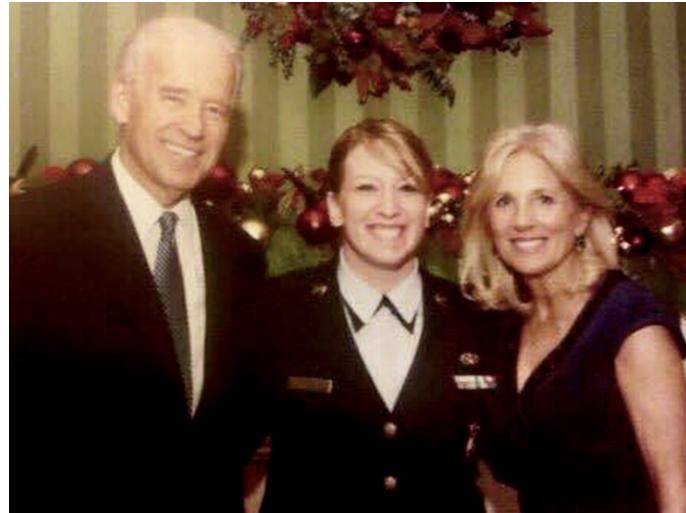
BC3 also offers priority registration to student-veterans, enabling them to reserve seats in courses two weeks in advance of other students. The college schedules former BC3 student-veterans to guide orientations for new BC3 student-veterans, provides a lounge specifically for student-veterans, reserves a study room for student-veterans during finals week, and in 2016 created a Green Zone.

The Green Zone, comprised of 24 administrators and faculty members who have received specialized training, educates other faculty and staff about the military experience, challenges student-veterans attending BC3 face when transitioning from military service to civilian life and to college, and resources and basic resource referral techniques.

Recognition validates BC3’s efforts, college president says

“It is always extra-special to do whatever we can for those who dedicated their lives to the military in our country,” said Dr. Nick Neupauer, BC3’s president. “And I say that not only from a BC3 perspective, but also from an individual perspective. These are people who gave so much of their lives for the betterment of our country.”

“From a college perspective, it’s just fantastic that we received this recognition. It really validates the things we have been doing with this very special group of students.”



More than 70 veterans of the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps and Navy are enrolled at BC3 in the spring 2021 semester, Smith said. BC3's current student-veterans are also active or former reservists or members of the National Guard. Almost half are enrolled full time, and one in five is female, Smith said.

Following military service, Alden enrolled at BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing in New Castle, Moyer at BC3 @ Brockway in Brockway and Pintell, at BC3's main campus in Butler Township. Alden and Moyer are veterans of the Air Force and Pintell, of the Army.

Alden and Pintell were among 21 student-veterans in BC3's Class of 2020, Smith said. Pintell is pursuing his second associate degree at the college and Moyer is seeking an associate degree in Nursing, R.N.

All credited Smith, who is also BC3's associate director of financial aid and helped to navigate "confusing" G.I. Bill benefits paperwork, Moyer said. "A confusing spider web is putting it lightly."



David Pintell, 30, of Butler, served in the Army and worked with American and Iraqi civilians on a provincial reconstruction team "to help rebuild the area," he said. Pintell earned his first associate degree from Butler County Community College in 2020 in computer information systems-programming specialist and is pursuing a second in computer information systems-computer support specialist. BC3 has been designated as a Military Friendly School for the sixth time since 2013 by Viqtorv.



Samuel Alden, of New Castle, third from left, is shown in 1990 in front of a Lockheed AC-130U gunship at Edwards Air Force Base in Edwards, Calif., while serving in the Air Force. Alden earned an associate degree in history from BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing in New Castle in 2020. BC3 has been designated as a Military Friendly School for the sixth time since 2013 by Viqtorv.

Air Force veteran from New Castle: “BC3 is amazing”

“Any question at all, (Smith) would answer it. She made sure all of your forms were inputted. She was really on top of everything,” said Alden, who served 24 years in the Air Force.

“BC3 is definitely proactive with the military,” said Alden, 60, a retired master sergeant who transported combat helicopters, tanks or Americans casualties aboard Lockheed C-130 Hercules aircraft. The 1978 graduate of Union Area Middle-High School flew missions across Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe and North and South America, then earned an associate degree in history from BC3.



Samuel Alden, of New Castle, right, is shown receiving an Air Medal award at Edwards Air Force Base in Edwards, Calif., in 1990, while serving in the Air Force. The Air Medal is awarded for single acts of heroism or meritorious achievement. Alden earned an associate degree in history from BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing in New Castle in 2020. BC3 has been designated as a Military Friendly School for the sixth time since 2013 by Victory.

“BC3 is amazing,” Alden said. “I would recommend it to anybody, especially military.”

Moyer, 33, served 10 years. The 2005 graduate of Brockway Area Junior-Senior High School worked a military police staff sergeant whose security patrols in the presidential section of Joint Base Andrews included discussions with then-President Obama, Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

The single mother of an 11-year-old son said BC3 allowed her to register for approximately seven prerequisite courses that she completed before being able to enter the college’s 2½-year-old career program at BC3 @ Brockway.

“We spent the majority of our young adulthood serving our country and being away from our family, and it was nice to come back,” Moyer said. “BC3 makes you feel like part of the family.”

They treat you like ‘You did this for us. Now let us help you in this transition. You’re transitioning out of the military into your civilian world. Let us help you.’”

Pintell, 30, is a 2008 graduate of Butler Area Senior High School who served as a private first-class in the Army and who worked with American and Iraqi civilians on a provincial reconstruction team “to help rebuild the area,” he said.

Army veteran from Butler: “Love BC3 shows for all students is unique”

Pintell earned his first associate degree from BC3 in computer information systems-programming specialist and is pursuing a second in computer information systems-computer support specialist.

“It feels like veterans matter, going to BC3,” Pintell said. “The personality that BC3 shows. The love that BC3 shows for all their students. It’s unique. I feel good going to school there.”

Students in her classes, along with BC3 faculty and staff, have written messages of appreciation in greeting cards to be sent in advance of Flag Day or Veterans Day to residents of the VA Butler Healthcare’s Sgt. Joseph George Kusick Community Living Center, said Cheryl Macon. Macon, a BC3 business professor, has coordinated the outreach for most of the past 20 years.

Students in BC3’s hospitality club have prepared and sold takeout turkey dinners in advance of Veterans Day with proceeds benefiting the college’s Student Veterans Association, said Jenn Taylor, a BC3 instructor and coordinator of the college’s hospitality management programs.

Students in BC3’s nursing club collected sundries for U.S. troops abroad in honor of a New Castle classmate who was unable to attend the Nursing, R.N., program’s conclusive pinning ceremony in 2018. The classmate, also technical sergeant in the Air Force Reserve, was in mandatory two-week training, in Albuquerque, N.M., in preparation for being deployed out of country for the first time.



Allison Moyer, of Brockway, is shown with her son, Landon, 11. Moyer served in the Air Force with military police securing the hangar at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, in preparation for the president to board Air Force One. Moyer, 33, is pursuing an associate degree in Nursing, R.N., from BC3 @ Brockway in Brockway. BC3 has been designated as a Military Friendly School for the sixth time since 2013 by Victory.

Air Force veteran from Brockway: “At BC3, it feels like a family”

BC3 will also offer for a second consecutive semester a free noncredit Veteran Suicide: Suicide Prevention is Everyone’s Business course on BC3’s main campus beginning March 10. The Lifelong Learning course will be instructed by Peter Albert, suicide prevention coordinator at the Butler VA.

“Any time a school or anyone sticks their neck out like that, and goes above and beyond, that is always a good thing,” Pintell said. “And BC3 definitely does it.”



Stella Smith, Butler County Community College’s veterans coordinator and associate director of financial aid, is shown March 2 in the student-veterans lounge on BC3’s main campus in Butler Township. BC3 has been designated as a Military Friendly School for the sixth time since 2013 by Victory. The college offers priority registration to student-veterans, enabling them to reserve seats in courses two weeks in advance of other students, schedules former BC3 student-veterans to guide orientations for new BC3 student-veterans, and reserves a study room for student-veterans during finals week.

BC3 student-veterans are eligible for the Butler County American Legion Post 117 Scholarship, the Butler County American Legion Post 778 “Veterans Helping Veterans” Scholarship, the Butler County American Legion Riders Veterans Incentive Scholarship, the Butler French and Belgian Club Scholarship, the Spc. Ross A. McGinnis “Pay a Good Deed Forward” Scholarship and the Butler County American Legion Auxiliary Post 117 Scholarship.

BC3’s Military Friendly School designation, Alden said, “makes the person feel like they can come back into society after being in the military and have a place that accepts them completely, not just for the tuition. You feel like they are actually there to help you. And that’s what struck me the most. The personal touch at BC3 is really important, especially for veterans trying to find their way.”

“At BC3, it feels like a family,” Moyer said. “They care about you. You’re not just another number.”

Added Pintell: “When I was looking into other schools, as soon as they get your number and as soon as they get your information, they don’t care what happens to you. At BC3, it doesn’t feel like anyone is left behind.”