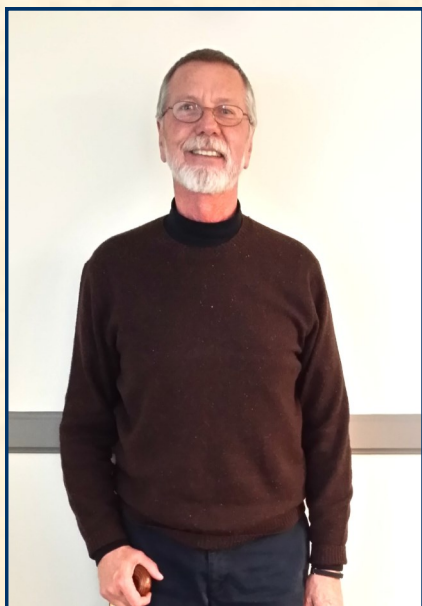


# Volunteer of the Month

## January 2016

*Jerry Otten*



Jerry Otten is the Buddy-to-Buddy Volunteer Veteran Program's January 2016 Volunteer of the Month! Jerry began volunteering with Buddy-to-Buddy in February 2014 and has been positively impacting the lives of soldiers at the Big Rapids Armory, Camp Grayling, and now at the Howell Armory after recently relocating to Southeast Michigan.

Jerry earned the trust of the soldiers he worked with at the Big Rapids Armory and is now beginning to establish the same types of relationships with those in his units at Howell, the 1462 TRANS CO and 156 SIG CO. Due to his easygoing and approachable presence in his units and in the community, Jerry has been able to assist individuals with issues ranging from substance abuse and mental health to employment and benefits. He recently represented Buddy-to-Buddy at a Veterans Day event at Concordia University in Ann Arbor.

Beginning in May 1969, Jerry served in the Air Force for two years, including a year in Vietnam where he was assigned to MACV as an English Language Instructor for the VNAF. Jerry earned a BA in economics from Rutgers University and an MSW and MPA from the University of South Carolina. He spent 25 years working in health care management, including 16 years as the CEO of three different university-based physician groups. Jerry and his wife Marilyn have five children, including a son who is a Harrier pilot in the Marine Corps, and nine grandchildren.

Since Jerry has always been interested in veterans issues and wanted to assist veterans in whatever way possible, he has found volunteering for Buddy-to-Buddy very rewarding and enjoys meeting other Buddy-to-Buddy volunteers. His favorite aspect of volunteering for Buddy-to-Buddy has been getting to know and feel respected by the soldiers in his unit, saying, "I've been really impressed by their commitment to what they do and their unsolicited expressions of their love for their country." Jerry spends his free time going to see movies with his wife, working out, and reading, as well as keeping in touch with all of his children and grandchildren. He and his wife are huge dog enthusiasts and have a Newfoundland and a Golden Retriever.

**Thank you for your commitment to helping veterans, Jerry!**