

Former soldier relates stories of war, PTSD

"Wars End with Me" by Shari Berg with Patrick Strobel is a series of stories written to tell of a soldier's experience with PTSD. Strobel is a Butler native.

"I met Patrick in 2002 at an event at the courthouse," said Berg, a former Butler Eagle staff writer.



Shari Berg

"I interviewed him for that story and then found out he was going to be deployed."

Subsequently, the newspaper wanted to do a series from the Iraqi war zone, and so Strobel for a couple of months would get in touch about once a week, Berg said.

"Then I hadn't heard from him for a while ... his mom called to say that he had been injured. His convoy had gone over an IED."

That was in 2003. Berg said she kept in touch with Strobel a bit, but that he was struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder.

"The therapist thought it would help him to write his story," Berg recalled. "He wanted to tell his story."

For him, PTSD is about survivor's guilt. His injuries ranged from shrapnel wounds to hearing loss.

The process to bring the book to fruition took four years, Berg said.

"When he first told me the story, we were done for a couple of weeks. He couldn't talk for a while and I thought, 'wow, can I really write about that?'"

They also took a break from writing the book when Strobel went for treatment.

Both Strobel and Berg wanted resources for returning military members to be a big part of the book.

"This book maybe includes half of what I wanted, but I got to the point where I thought that if we don't get it out there, we'll keep second-guessing or adding things," Berg noted.

One of the names that kept coming up in research for this book was Dr. Sudip Bose, a medical doctor who has devoted his life to veteran advocacy.

Another was Dr. Roger Brooke at Duquesne University who is well-known for working with the trauma of what PTSD does to a person.

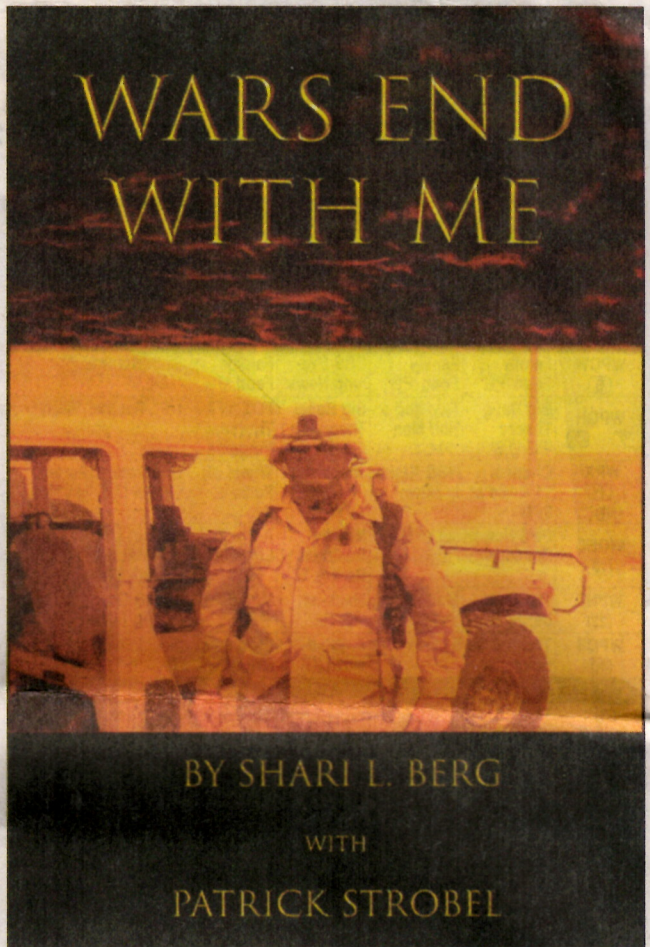
Also featured in the book is the Strong Star Network, a type of behavioral therapy that helps those who suffer from PTSD to work through their feelings and repurpose them.

The book also touches on treatments from traditional therapy to service dogs.

Companion website www.warsendwithme.com addresses ongoing research about PTSD.

Strobel's son

Strobel, 50, works with



a government contractor in the Netherlands now that he's out of the active military.

He said his son wanting to enter the military prompted him to write "Wars End with Me."

"He wanted to join the Army, but after what I endured, I was not interested in anyone dealing with what I was going through, let alone my offspring, my son," Strobel said. "When I asked him why he wanted to join, knowing what he saw me enduring, he said he wanted to serve."

Strobel didn't want anyone else to go through war; he wanted wars to end with him.

New works

Berg is now at work on several books, one a story "based on a true story but fictionalized enough to protect people," she said.

The main character is

bipolar, she said. Another book is a positive story about a person with autism.

"The first one I started 16 years ago. You know when it's not what you thought or what you wanted, so I put it away for a while."

She also wrote the 2015 book called "Pioneer Proud: Celebrating 50 Years of Butler County Community College" and does public relations work for school districts.

"Since I was 8 or 9 I wanted to write," she said.

She finds time to write early in the morning or late at night, on weekends too. "It's hard to write a book that way ... you have to get back in that moment to write."

The 151-page "Wars End with Me" is available online in digital and paperback formats.

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COUNTY

The Beacon, 231 Beacon Road, Renfrew, features the

turne party featuring the band Center Stage on Saturday. The corn maze is open for the

A Halloween dance featuring The Dorals is planned for Saturday at the Meridian

Meatball hoagies and snacks provided. Cost is \$15. Call 724-290-7718