



# YORK COUNTY - VICTORY CHAPTER #13

YORKTOWN, VIRGINIA

<b>Volume 25 Issue 1</b>	<i>Monthly Newsletter</i>	<b>January 2024</b>
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**ELECTED OFFICERS**

**COMMANDER**

Larry Brewer

**SR. VICE CMDR.**

Russ Jordan

**1<sup>st</sup> VICE CMDR.**

LaShawn Boyer

**2<sup>nd</sup> VICE CMDR.**

Jacqueline Herrmann

**TREASURER**

April Dozier

**CHAPLAIN**

Terry Taylor

**JUDGE ADVOCATE**

Shay Odom

**APPOINTED OFFICERS**

**ADJUTANT**

Ana Alicea

**CERTIFIED SERVICE OFFICERS**

Terry Bohlinger, Carl Garrett, Tim Valentine, LaShawn Boyer, Shay Odom, Sharri Peck, Rob Lurie

**OFFICER OF THE DAY (vacant)**

**SERGEANT AT ARMS Don Lamury**

**BENEFITS PROTECTION OFFICER**

Shay Odom

**MEMBER-AT-LARGE**

George Robinson, Jacqueline Herrmann, Carl Garrett, Larry Mead

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

Ana Alicea, Terry Taylor, Bill Townsley

**WOMEN VETERANS COMMITTEE CHAIR**

Lashawn Boyer



Farewell Comrade and Sister in Arms Sherba J. Essex

*On silver wings by Sherba J. Essex*

*You've slipped the surly bonds of Earth never more to roam. God has stilled your restless wings and called you to his home. Proud eagle you roamed the sky so free. God has closed your eyes in death nevermore to see. The Lord watched you soar where never eagles flew. He watched you streak across the sky with sunlight on the dew. He held you in the blue suspended in his hand. You touched his face in awe, and placed your feet on land. All birds who soar sometimes have to rest. God takes them to his home and holds them to his breast. Somewhere beyond the sunset, your spirits roam the sky. You walk in the fields of lilies for eagles do not die. Sometimes in the silence I hear the airplanes roar. I think about your laughter and how you fly no more. Silver wings and laughter echo through the sky. I touched my lips in prayer for all of you who fly. Sunlight touched the silver wings upon your coat of blue. God called you home to rest your work on earth was through.*

**COMMANDER'S CORNER.** DAV Mission Statement: "We are dedicated to a single purpose: empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. We accomplish that by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them; fighting for the interests of America's injured heroes on Capitol Hill; and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life."

Commander wants to extend a thanks to all members for their participation in the Chapter Christmas Event. It was a great success!! Special thanks to Comrade Don Lamury for visiting all the businesses (Advance Auto Parts, Vinny's, Ken Mathews, Auto Bell, Ace Hardware, Andrea's, Jimmy da Greek, 134 Grille, Topical Café, Harley Davidson, Mission BBQ, Texas Road House, Taylor's Do It Center, and Italian Delights) that donated gift cards, gift certificate, and supplies used to raffle during the event. Another special thanks to Comrade Chuck Silvers for decorating the venue and for setting up the kitchen and serving area for the event. Thank you also to the Dept Commander, Dept 1<sup>JVC</sup>, and Dept 2JVC for attending our event.

The General Member Business meeting will be held on January 20, 2024, at 0900. We would love to have more members participate during these meetings so, all are welcome and encouraged to come!!

Congratulations to our new 2JVC Jackie Herrmann! Also welcome Comrade Don Lamury as our new Sgt at Arms.

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**JUDGE ADVOCATES CORNER:**

The BPTL remains committed to being on the forefront on legislative initiatives and concerns. Over the last two months, I have been attending legislative venues and promoting the Commander Action Network at every turn. We are continuing to raise awareness and add to our DAV CAN numbers to keep our commitment to veterans and their understanding of the legislative process. One of key legislative initiatives is the Virginia Military Retirement Income Tax Exemption. This exemption allows military who are 40 years or older to exclude up to 40,000 of their military retirement income for Virginia state taxation. Previously, this tax benefit was only available veterans 55 and over. The new rules go into effect tax year 2025. Please contact your tax advisor for specifics. Also, another key piece of legislation that passed involves The Virginia state law, Tax Relief for Surviving Spouse of a Member of the Armed Forces “Killed in Action” has been reformed through a Virginia Constitutional Amendment to include “Died on Active Duty” in the section that addresses surviving spouses of members of the armed forces killed in action. [This initiative would allow these spouses to receive the same benefit as veterans whose spouses were killed in action](#) <sup>1</sup>.

**DAV 5K**

Team Fresh Start, led by Captain Shay Odom, had another successful year in 2023.

Team Fresh Start raised a total of \$2,686.00. Despite facing several challenges, including rising inflation cost and donors being reluctant to give because of other competing priorities Team Fresh Start was able to overcome these obstacles and achieve their goals. “Overall, Team Fresh Start had another successful year in 2023, surpassing their goals from last year. We are excited to see what the future holds for this amazing team.”

**New Health Initiative**

Veteran Administration (VA) and the National Institute of Health (NIH) looks into Gulf War Illness

On April 17, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the National Institute of Health launched a collaborative research project investigating Gulf War Illness (GWI). This study aims to obtain a better understanding of GWI to develop definitive diagnostic criteria, testing potential treatments. GWI refers to a group of unexplained or ill-defined chronic symptoms in veterans deployed to the Persian Gulf during Operation Desert Storm and Operation Desert Shield. The problem reported from GWI include joint pain, fatigue, rashes, memory issues and digestive issues with no apparent cause. It afflicts about one-third of 700,000 U.S. troops who served during these operations