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Winter Issue 2025-2026

Veteran's Outreach Ministries

VOM

magazine



FREE

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WELCOME *from the* Board of Directors

We hope that you enjoy the articles in the Winter 2025/2026 edition of VOM Magazine. In this publication we have included Psalm 91, the Soldier's Prayer that asked God to protect our military from harm. With all the problems occurring today from outside forces, the United States is facing many issues concerning our country's sovereignty. We ask that everyone pray for our troops' safety to succeed in keeping our freedom.

As we successfully transition from Fall (the change of colors and cooler weather) to Winter (colder weather and heating bills) we must remind ourselves that the Lord is still in command and is still responsible for the change of seasons and everyone/everything around this change.

God has given us the gift of freedom to allow us to pray to him without persecution and have a constitution that protects our freedom. For this to happen, we must pray to God the Father for allowing our country to flourish through his agape love.

As the holidays are upon us, we are blessed to gather with our family and friends but there are many who are suffering from conflict in their lives from loneliness and sadness for the people who are no longer with us with spouses and families also being affected. As we reflect on our relationship with God and pray for his understanding and guidance, this can be accomplished by Christian Life Study, Prayer Time, Worship and Fellowship at the Church of your choice, or one that you feel comfortable with. Using the Matthew 7:7 bible verse one can feel a very powerful force for healing and of self-reflection to building a relationship with God our Father.

Let us not forget the true meaning of Christmas. "The Reason for the Season" the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In Isaiah 9:6, it was predicted of the coming of Jesus. In the gospel of Luke 2: 8-12, gives us an accounting of the actual birth of Jesus. With each day coming closer to Christmas let all of us remember to celebrate its true meaning, the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. *Merry Christmas!*



www.VeteransOutreachMinistries.org
Veteran's Outreach Ministries, is located in the Newark/Bear/Glasgow area, incorporated in Delaware in July 2014 by veterans to be a resource to veterans and their families. **VOM is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.** Veteran's Outreach Ministries is expanding into Maryland and Pennsylvania. Currently, we are seeking volunteers to help us with this growth. If anyone is interested in assisting us with this expansion please contact me at 610-299-5523 or johnd.vom@gmail.com for more information.

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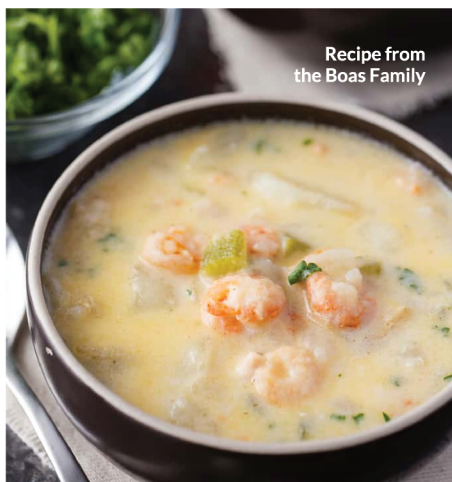
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Recipe from
the Boas Family

Shrimp Chowder Recipe

TOTAL TIME: 30 min **SERVINGS:** 4-6

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 yellow onion diced
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 cup boiling water
- 3 medium russet potatoes, cubed
- ¼ cup celery chopped
- 2lbs deveined shrimp
- 2 ½ cup milk
- ½ cup Swiss cheese shredded
- ½ cup cheddar cheese shredded
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp celery salt
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley chopped finely

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1** Add butter to a large pot on medium heat. Once melted, add onions and cook until soft, but make sure to not brown them.
- 2** Add in celery, potatoes, salt, pepper, garlic powder, celery salt and boiling water. Cook for about 15 minutes on medium heat or until potatoes are softened.
- 3** Reduce heat to medium low and add in milk and shrimp. Heat for about 5 to 7 minutes.
- 4** Stir in parsley, Swiss cheese and cheddar cheese. Serve hot.



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VOM & COMMUNITY EVENTS DECEMBER 2025 - FEBRUARY 2026

VeteransOutreachMinistries.org
Visit for Full Event Details

- Dec 10 - Veteran and Community Job Fair - Susquehanna Region**
12-3pm. Open to the public, many participating vendors.
Susquehanna American Legion, Post 135, 300 Cherry St, Perryville MD
- Dec 11 - VOM Meeting starting at 6pm** - All welcome!
Glasgow Baptist Church, 3021 County Line Rd, Newark DE.
- Dec 13 - Breakfast with Santa**
Elkton Moose Lodge, 71 Cherry Hill Rd, Elkton, MD.
- Dec 18 - Veterans Roundtable Discussion**
9:30am-1:30pm. Elkton Moose Lodge , 71 Cherry Hill Rd, Elkton, MD.
- Dec 25 - *Merry Christmas! Remember the reason for the season***
- Jan & Feb - Winter Lights, Cecil Nights - County-wide Winter Festival!**
Winter-themed events (dining, shopping, family outings, and more are scheduled ALL January & February long). winterlightscecilnights.com.
- Jan 1 - *Happy New Year's Day!***
- Jan 15 - VOM Meeting starting at 6pm** - All welcome!
Glasgow Baptist Church, 3021 County Line Rd, Newark DE.
- Jan 19 - *Martin Luther King, Jr. Day***
- Jan 23-24 - Maryland State Police Polar Bear Plunge**
Seeking Plungers! www.MarylandPlunge.com.
Sandy Point State Park, 1100 E College Pkwy, Annapolis, MD.
- Jan TBD - Veterans Lunch & Learn, Yogi Basics**
Pura Vida Yoga and Physical Therapy, 5301 Pulaski Hwy, Perryville, MD.
This is a veteran-owned business with a veteran instructor!
- Feb 12 - Veterans Roundtable Discussion**
9:30am-1:30pm. Elkton Moose Lodge , 71 Cherry Hill Rd, Elkton, MD.
- Feb 16 - *Presidents' Day***
- Feb 19 - VOM Meeting starting at 6pm** - All welcome!
Glasgow Baptist Church, 3021 County Line Rd, Newark DE.



**We're Seeking New
Board Members for our
VOM Delaware Branch**

FOR INFO, PLEASE VISIT:
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Tom Hogate at 302-229-1819
or ThomasHogate@gmail.com

10 YEARS
VETERAN'S OUTREACH
MINISTRIES

DELAWARE & MARYLAND HISTORY

THE C&D CANAL

Construction...

In 1822, the C&D Canal Company reorganized, discovering that over \$2 million would be needed to continue construction. Pennsylvania invested \$100,000, Maryland \$50,000, Delaware \$25,000, and the federal government \$450,000, with the remainder raised from the public.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers played a crucial, though unofficial, role in planning the route. Along with two civilian engineers, they recommended a four-lock course from Newbold's Landing Harbor (now Delaware City) west to the Back Creek branch of Maryland's Elk River.

Construction resumed in April 1824, employing roughly 2,600 laborers wielding pick and shovel through swampy, slide-prone terrain, earning just 75 cents a day. After five years of grueling work, the canal officially opened in 1829 at a cost of \$3.5 million, making it one of the era's most expensive canal projects.

In 1825, chief engineer John Randel Jr., who had completed the difficult eastern section, was dismissed. He sued for breach of contract, winning \$226,885.84 in 1834—over \$7 million today. Appeals reached the Supreme Court, which upheld the award, and state legislatures required the canal company to pay its debts within five years. The judgment nearly bankrupted the enterprise.

Despite setbacks, the C&D Canal endured, a testament to early American engineering and the determination of the workers who built it.

1829 to 1919...

The Chesapeake & Delaware Canal stretched nearly 14 miles, 10 feet deep, 66 feet wide at the waterline, with 36-foot-wide channels at the bottom. A covered wooden bridge at Summit, Delaware, spanned 250 feet across the “Deep Cut,” with the floor 90 feet above the canal. Three wooden swing bridges and locks at Delaware City, St. Georges, and Chesapeake City facilitated vessel passage. The locks, originally 100 by 22 feet, were later enlarged to 220 by 24 feet.

Freight and passenger vessels—including barges, schooners, and sloops—were towed by teams of mules and horses. Cargo ranged from lumber and grain to coal, iron, and whiskey. Packet services, most notably the Ericsson Line, carried freight and passengers between Baltimore and Philadelphia into the 1940s. The line's steamers grew from under 100 tons to over 600, with 70–80 staterooms added for passengers. Named for its first ship, Ericsson, built in 1843 with a screw propeller by John Ericsson, the line operated from Baltimore for 75 years, greatly boosting canal trade and regional prosperity.

Lock water loss was an early problem. Steam-powered pumps and a large waterwheel, installed in Chesapeake City between 1837 and 1854, lifted water into



the canal's upper levels. The engines lifted 170 tons per minute, consuming eight tons of coal daily, and remained in use into the 1920s.

Throughout the 19th century, the canal faced competition from the New Castle and Frenchtown Turnpike and Rail Road. Steam vessels required larger locks, and by the early 20th century, declining traffic and high operating costs highlighted the need for a larger, deeper canal. Multiple new canal routes were proposed, but agreement was elusive until 1906, when President Theodore Roosevelt appointed a commission to study the feasibility of converting the canal into a free and open waterway.



Photos: (Above) Eastern Lock of the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal, Battery Park, December 2011.

(Below) A 360 photosphere shot from above and between the St. Georges and the William V. Roth Jr. Bridges.



DAYS TO DISPLAY THE AMERICAN FLAG

Holidays to Display Flag

December 2025 - February 2026 Issue

- Dec 7 - National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day (1/2 staff until sunset)
- Dec 13 - U.S. National Guard Birthday
- Dec 20 - U.S. Space Force Birthday
- Dec 25 - Christmas Day
- Jan 1 - New Year's Day
- Jan 19 - Martin Luther King Jr Day
- Feb 12 - Lincoln's Birthday
- Feb 16 - President's Day

And other such days as may be proclaimed by the President of the United States.

Non Flag Display Days (for information only)

- Dec 3 - First Sunday of the Advent
- Dec 4 - Hannukah Begins
- Dec 8, 1941 - War Declared on Japan
- Dec 10 - Human Rights Day
- Dec 11, 1941 - Germany and Italy Declared War on U.S.
- Dec 12 - Hannukah Begins
- Dec 15, 2011 - Iraq War Ended
- Dec 15 - Bill of Rights Day
- Dec 20, 1989 - Panama Campaign Began
- Dec 21 - Winter Begins
- Dec 31 - New Year's Eve
- Dec 31, 1946 - Official End To WWII
- Dec 31, 2013 - Kosovo Campaign Ended
- Jan 6 - Epiphany (Traditional)
- Jan 17, 1991 - Persian Gulf War Began
- Jan 27, 1973 - Signing of Vietnam Peace Accord
- Jan 31, 1990 - Panama Campaign Ended
- Feb 1 - National Freedom Day
- Feb 2 - Groundhog Day
- Feb 3 - Four Chaplains Day
- Feb 8, 1910 - Boy Scouts of America Founded
- Feb 14 - St. Valentines Day
- Feb 17 - Shrove Tuesday/Marti Gras
- Feb 18 - Ash Wednesday
- Feb 20 - National Caregiver's Day
- Feb 22 - George Washington Birthday (actual)



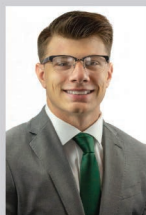
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This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor, Tyler Simonds. Edward Jones, Member SIPC

FINANCIAL FOCUS



Generosity meets strategy with tax-savvy donations

Giving to charity feels good, but understanding the tax benefits can benefit both the charity and you. Whether you donate regularly or are planning your first gift, knowing how charitable tax deductions work can help you make informed decisions while supporting causes you care about. **Here are things to consider:**

The basics: Itemizing vs. standard deduction. To benefit from charitable tax deductions, you need to itemize your deductions on your tax return. Everyone automatically receives a standard deduction, which in 2025 is \$31,500 for married couples filing jointly or \$15,750 for single filers. You'll only benefit from itemizing if your total deductions, including charitable gifts, exceed these amounts.

For many people, charitable donations alone won't push them over the standard deduction threshold. However, when combined with other deductible expenses like mortgage interest or state and local taxes, itemizing can make financial sense.

If you give regularly but don't usually exceed the standard deduction, consider "stacking" your donations. Instead of donating \$5,000 annually, you might donate \$15,750 in one year to exceed the itemization threshold, then take the standard deduction in subsequent years.

Ensure your donation qualifies. To claim a deduction, you must give to a qualified charitable organization recognized by the IRS. You can verify an organization's status on the IRS website or ask the charity for their determination letter. Donations to individuals, even those in need, don't qualify for tax deductions.

Additionally, you can't receive personal benefits in exchange for your donation. If you give \$500 to a charity but receive concert tickets worth \$200, your deductible amount is only \$300.

How much can you deduct? The IRS limits charitable deductions based on your adjusted gross income (AGI). For cash donations to public charities, you can typically deduct up to 60% of your AGI. If you donate stocks or other appreciated assets you've held for more than a year, the limit is generally 30% of your AGI.

If your donation exceeds these limits in a single year, you can carry forward the unused portion for up to five years.

What to donate. Think strategically about what you donate. While cash is easiest, donating appreciated stocks can provide additional tax benefits since you avoid paying capital gains taxes on the investment's growth.

Keep good records. Documentation matters. For donations under \$250, a canceled check or receipt works fine. Cash donations of \$250 or more need written acknowledgment from the charity. For larger non-cash donations of property exceeding \$5,000 in value, the IRS requires a qualified written appraisal. Keep these records with your tax documents in case the IRS requests proof. See IRS Publication No. 526 and No. 561 for information on charitable contributions and valuing donated property.

The bottom line: With thoughtful planning, you can maximize both your impact on causes you care about and the tax benefits you receive.





EMPOWERING VETERAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Nick Callazzo
Boots to Business Instructor
 Mid-Atlantic Veterans Business Outreach Center

How One Program Helps Veterans Turn Skills Into Successful Businesses

Veterans bring unmatched discipline, leadership, and mission-focused thinking to the civilian workforce—but many are also discovering that these strengths make them ideal entrepreneurs. To support veterans ready to step into business ownership, the Empowering Veteran Entrepreneurship program offers a structured, five-session series designed to transform an idea into a fully developed business plan.

This January, participating veterans will explore the fundamentals of entrepreneurship, gain critical business skills, and learn how to analyze markets, competitors, and opportunities. Each session builds on the last, providing a clear roadmap from concept to launch.

January 6 – On Becoming an Entrepreneur

The series opens with a candid discussion on why many veterans choose to start a business. Participants examine their motivations, long-term goals, and the personal and professional rewards of entrepreneurship. This foundational session helps veterans align their business pursuits with their strengths, lifestyle, and values.

January 8 – Checklist for Starting a Business

Next, the program walks attendees through the essential steps of early business planning. From legal structure to financial readiness, veterans learn how to conduct a preliminary business analysis that sets the stage for smart decision-making.

January 13 – Traits of an Effective Business Owner

Great businesses begin with capable leaders. This session explores the characteristics, habits, and core functions of successful owners. Veterans assess their own strengths and identify areas for growth as they prepare to take on the demands of entrepreneurship.

January 15 – Developing Concept Feasibility

An idea is only as strong as the opportunity behind it. Participants learn how to evaluate their concepts using an idea-evaluation checklist—testing viability, uniqueness, and market demand. By the end of this session, veterans have a clearer understanding of whether their business idea is positioned for success.

January 20 – Industry, Market, and Competitive Analysis

Understanding the business environment is crucial. This in-depth session covers two pillars of smart planning:

Market Research—gathering data on market size, consumer demographics, buying patterns, and industry trends. These insights inform pricing, product development, and marketing strategies.

Competitive Analysis—evaluating direct and indirect competitors, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and uncovering market gaps. Veterans learn how to craft a compelling value proposition that sets their business apart.

January 22 – Nine Keys to a Marketing Plan

The final session translates research into action. Tailored specifically for veteran entrepreneurs, this workshop breaks down the essential components of an effective marketing plan—from branding and messaging to channels, budgets, and customer engagement strategies.

This program series equips veterans with knowledge, confidence, and the tools to thrive in today's competitive business landscape. By combining military-honed skills with practical, modern business strategies, veterans gain a powerful advantage as they launch and grow their enterprises.

The Healing Power of Creativity: Why Winter Is the Perfect Time for Veterans to Explore New Hobbies

Winter naturally invites a slower pace. Shorter days and quiet evenings create space for reflection—and for many veterans, this season can also bring emotional challenges such as loneliness, stress, or disrupted routines. But winter also offers an opportunity: a chance to use creativity as a powerful tool for healing, growth, and connection.

Art therapy is one of the most accessible ways to support mental and emotional health. Simple activities like sketching, painting, coloring, or working with clay can calm the nervous system and reduce stress. Veterans don't need to be "artists" to experience the benefits. Creative expression allows thoughts and emotions to surface gradually and safely, offering a sense of control and relief during difficult moments.

Writing and photography are equally meaningful outlets. **Journaling** helps organize thoughts, ease anxiety, and clarify goals. Creative writing—poetry, stories, or memoir—gives veterans space to explore memories and perspectives in their own time and in their own words.

Photography, even with a simple phone camera, encourages mindfulness by shifting focus to small moments of beauty: winter light, family gatherings, or the texture of frost on a window. These captured images become reminders of presence and gratitude.

Winter is also an ideal season for **gardening preparation**. While the ground may be frozen, planning a spring garden provides purpose and structure. Veterans can start seeds indoors, design garden layouts, clean tools, or grow small indoor herbs. Nurturing something living—even a single potted plant—can bring comfort and routine during the coldest months.

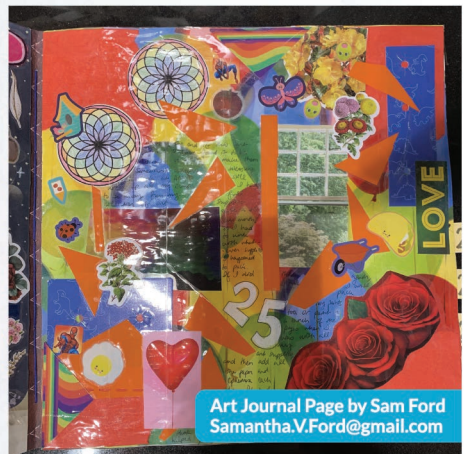
Music and movement add another layer of healing. Listening to music, learning a new instrument, joining a chorus, or even incorporating gentle stretching or tai chi can improve mood and support physical well-being. Rhythm, sound, and motion help regulate stress and reconnect body and mind.

Across all these activities, the common theme is simple: **creativity reduces stress, improves mental health, and strengthens identity beyond military service.** It offers veterans a way to express themselves, find calm, and build personal meaning throughout the winter months.

As you explore creative hobbies this season, Veterans Outreach Ministries invites you to share your work with us. We welcome artwork, poems, photography, short stories, or reflections for upcoming magazine issues.

Your creativity may inspire another veteran—and your voice deserves to be heard.

Explore FREE Veteran Art Classes offered at the NCC Art Studio (on page 18).



Holistic Wellness Practices: Nurturing Mind, Body, and Spirit

In a world that often celebrates busyness, productivity, and constant motion, many people are rediscovering the importance of slowing down and caring for themselves in a more complete way. This shift has sparked growing interest in holistic wellness, an approach to health that considers the whole person—mind, body, and spirit—rather than focusing on symptoms or isolated issues.

Holistic wellness isn't a trend; it's a philosophy rooted in balance, self-awareness, and long-term well-being. By incorporating simple but powerful practices, anyone can begin to cultivate a healthier, more vibrant life.

What Is Holistic Wellness?

Holistic wellness is the understanding that your physical health, emotional state, mental clarity, and spiritual connection all influence one another. When one area is neglected, the others can struggle. When each is nourished, you feel more grounded, resilient, and aligned.

Holistic health encourages preventative care, lifestyle awareness, and mindful living. Rather than seeking quick fixes, it focuses on building habits that support lasting vitality.

Key Pillars of Holistic Wellness

1. Mindful Movement

Movement isn't only about exercise—it's about cultivating presence and connecting with your body. Practices like yoga, tai chi, and walking meditation encourage strength, flexibility, and grounding. These activities also teach breath awareness, helping calm the nervous system and reduce stress.

2. Nourishing Nutrition

Food is fuel, but it's also information for the body. A holistic approach emphasizes whole, nutrient-rich foods, mindful eating, and understanding how different foods affect energy, mood, and digestion. Rather than rigid dieting, it focuses on balance, enjoyment, and long-term health.

3. Breathwork and Stress Regulation

Controlled breathing techniques—such as diaphragmatic breathing, box breathing, or pranayama—activate the body's relaxation response. These tools help manage stress, improve focus, and regulate emotions. Even a few minutes each day can make a profound difference.



4. Emotional Wellness and Self-Reflection

Holistic health encourages actively caring for emotional well-being. This may involve journaling, therapy, meditation, or practicing self-compassion. Through reflection and awareness, individuals learn to process emotions, release mental clutter, and cultivate inner peace.

5. Rest and Sleep Hygiene

Quality rest is essential for healing and mental clarity. Holistic wellness views sleep as a foundational practice, emphasizing calming nighttime routines, reducing screen exposure, and listening to the body's cues. Restorative sleep improves everything from immunity to mood stability.

6. Connection and Community

Human connection is vital to health. Healthy relationships, supportive environments, and a sense of community all contribute to emotional resilience and joy. Whether through family, friendships, yoga studios, or spiritual groups, connection brings meaning and belonging.

7. Spiritual Wellness

Spiritual wellness is about cultivating purpose, presence, and gratitude. This can involve meditation, nature walks, prayer, breathwork, or simply taking quiet moments to reconnect with yourself. When the spirit feels nurtured, life feels richer and more aligned.

Why Holistic Wellness Matters

Adopting holistic practices can transform health from the inside out. People who embrace this approach often experience:

- Increased energy and vitality
- Reduced stress and anxiety
- Improved sleep
- Enhanced emotional balance
- Stronger immune function
- Deeper self-awareness
- Greater sense of purpose

Holistic wellness is empowering because it puts health back in your hands—through everyday choices, intentional habits, and connection to self.

Getting Started: Simple Holistic Practices for Daily Life

You don't need a complete lifestyle overhaul to benefit from holistic wellness. Start with small shifts:

- Begin your morning with mindful breathing.
- Move your body in a way that feels good.
- Drink more water and choose whole foods.
- Limit distractions and practice presence.
- Set boundaries that protect your energy.
- Spend time outdoors.
- End the day with gratitude.

Little habits accumulate, creating powerful change over time.

A Path to Wholeness

Holistic wellness is an ongoing journey, not a destination. As you grow, your needs change—and holistic practices adapt with you. The goal is not perfection, but balance and self-understanding.

By nurturing mind, body, and spirit, you build a foundation for a life that feels authentic, empowered, and deeply well.

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Multitudes, Multitudes, in the "Aisles" of decision!

Clearly you will recognize that I have taken the liberty of reconstructing a well known verse in the Bible found in Joel 3:32 which says "Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision".

Once again we enter the Christmas season, of incurring paper cuts from flipping through magazines, going through bottles of Visine abusing our eyes with too much screen time with Big Box stores advertising products. And last but not least soaking our feet after navigating "aisle after aisle" in stores and malls trying to "decide" the perfect gift for the person or person's we care about most.

What if, after all this time spent, they didn't accept it! How would you feel?

You say, Harry, what does this have to do with Christmas?

Well it has to do with whose birthday we celebrate and why. His name is Jesus, the Son of God. Have you ever considered that Jesus was God's truly "perfect" gift to you and me?

And in obedience to His Father, Jesus came to earth as a baby, walked the "aisles" of life for 33 years, knowing all that time that He was the gift freely given to you and me. But there was a cost, not to you or me, but to the Father and the Son. Jesus must die.

Because the Bible says, "for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins". John 3:16, a well known verse says "for God, so love the world he gave his own begotten Son that whosoever believes on him should not perish, but have everlasting life".

What a gift! Remember early in this article I asked how would you feel if your gift was not accepted by one you cared for. But its your "decision" as you travel the "aisle" of life.

This Christmas why not accept His gift to you? Better yet do it today as 2 Cor 6:2 says "now is the day of salvation". How special would this Christmas be for both of you! That you accepted His gift!

Merry and most blessed Christmas!



VETERAN of the Quarter

*Sergeant
LeSans Alexander*

Sergeant LeSans Alexander is a 38-year Air Traffic Control (ATC) veteran who served in the U.S. Air Force as an air traffic controller for 16½ years and then continued her career in air traffic control within the Department of Defense, based in Dover, Delaware, where she resides. LeSans Alexander has dedicated over 30 years of service to the Delmarva area in both military and civilian capacities. She is currently retired as a Civilian Air Traffic Controller, Air Traffic Control Standardization and Evaluation Specialist, and Flying Hours Program Manager in Maryland, D.C., and the Pentagon.

Sergeant Alexander's accomplishments in ATC are numerous. She has held assignments in Berlin, supervised the Air Route Traffic Control Center, and managed the Dover Radar Approach Control (RAPCON), Dover Tower, Pentagon Tower, Davison Army Airfield, and the Fort Belvoir Ground Control Radar unit. She has served as interim Chief Controller, RAPCON Chief Controller, Tower Chief, and Training and Standards Manager at the Dover Air Force Base complex, overseeing flight safety and operational issues. She also served as Flying Hours Program Manager, responsible for pilot hours, equipment, and travel—a \$2.5 billion program.

Her expertise was critical during major events, including the response to 9/11, clearing regional airspace and directing approved traffic for FBI and security services, and developing revised operational procedures to handle airspace deviations.

Perhaps her most lasting impact has been in training. LeSans Alexander has directly trained 65 U.S. and international controllers, many of whom now hold key ATC positions worldwide, including in the U.S. Air Force, Department of Defense, and Federal Aviation Administration.



Then



Now

She is the first African-American female and first Air Traffic Controller inducted into the Delaware Aviation Hall of Fame in 2016. In 2017, she was unanimously nominated to the Board of Trustees and in 2028 was voted Vice-President. In fall 2019, she became the first Black female President of the organization, successfully leading the nonprofit through the COVID crisis and establishing its first Youth Aviation Scholarship, a program she continues to support through 2025.

LeSans has also served as Vice-President of First State Military Women Warriors (2018–2025), volunteered with the Delaware Veteran Standdown Committee for three years, and held three leadership positions with the Walter L. Fox Post 2, American Legion (2018–2024), including 2nd Vice Commander, 1st Vice Commander, and Executive House/Bar Manager.

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VETERAN of the Quarter

William F. Jiron, Jr.

William Jiron Jr., known by friends and family as Bill, honorably served in the United States Air Force from 1968 to 1989, completing more than twenty-one years of dedicated service to his country. A native of Washington, D.C., Bill returned to the D.C. suburbs following his military career, continuing his lifelong commitment to national service.

After retiring from the Air Force, Bill accepted employment as a federal government contractor, where he was able to apply his military skills in a civilian capacity. His work allowed him to continue contributing to national defense and public service in the Washington area.

In 2008, after becoming disabled, Bill retired from contracting and relocated to Delaware. Upon settling in Sussex County, he quickly recognized that even while using a wheelchair, he could still make a difference in the lives of fellow veterans. Motivated by that calling, he applied for and received approval from the Sussex County Planning and Zoning Commission to establish the Veterans Awareness Center in Greenwood, Delaware.

The Veterans Awareness Center became a vital resource hub for veterans on the western side of Sussex County, offering information, guidance, and emergency shelter for at risk veterans. Since its founding, Bill's guiding motto has been "I don't know is not an option." That philosophy has driven him to build strong partnerships across the State of Delaware, connecting veterans with resources that promote independence and self-sufficiency. Since its inception in 2008, Bill's initiative has served more than 16,000 veterans throughout the Delmarva region and beyond.

In addition to providing day to day support at the Center, Bill has led the creation and growth of several cornerstone programs:

- ***Delaware Veterans Stand Down*** – Serving as Public Affairs Officer for more than 18 years, coordinating annual events that provide essential services, fellowship, and entertainment for thousands of veterans.



- ***Military Women's Tea*** – Celebrating and supporting female service members for over 13 years.
- ***Give A Vet A Smile Program*** – Offering free dental care to disadvantaged veterans for more than 11 years.
- ***Mason Dixon Veterans Stand Down*** – Organized and directed for three years in Salisbury, Maryland, until Delaware's Stand Down expanded significantly in attendance.

In 2025, the Delaware Veterans Stand Down in Dover hosted over 1,500 veterans and guests, providing camaraderie, meals, and entertainment. More than 130 organizations, including federal, state, local, business, and faith-based partners, joined to serve those who have served our nation.

Beyond his administrative and advocacy work, Bill has always had a deep passion for music. After retiring from the Air Force, he studied voice under Meeker and Cole at Cochise College and later with Jerome Barry at the Scottish Rite in Washington, D.C. Bill generously shares his musical talent at veteran's events throughout the Eastern Shore, including at the burials of homeless veterans.



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When no family or friends are present, Bill performs a heartfelt rendition of "The Lord's Prayer," dedicating over 1,500 volunteer hours annually. He is also a proud 32° Mason within the Masonic Order.

Bill's distinguished affiliations include:

- Life Member, Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
- Commander, DAV Chapter 9 (Seaford, Delaware), 2008 to 2010
- Trained Service Officer and Aide to the DAV National Commander
- Recipient, Department of Delaware's 2011 Outstanding Disabled American Veteran of the Year Award
- Life Member, AMVETS Post 22 De.
- Life Member, American Legion Post 136 Md. (25 years)

In recognition of his exceptional volunteer service, Bill received the Governor John Carney Award for Volunteering in 2018. He also continues to support his wife, Liz Jiron, who serves as Director of the Delaware Veterans Stand Down.

Bill and Liz have shared a lifelong bond, having known each other since the fourth grade and marrying in 1999. Together, they have raised a family of five sons and two daughters, with fifteen grandchildren and six great grandchildren, all of whom, in one way or another, continue to uphold their legacy of service to veterans and community.

Legal Resource Fair

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Wilmington VA Medical Center in Collaboration with the
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Services Offered:

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RSVP by 12/05/2025 to Barbara.gibbons@va.gov / 302-287-1286
Barbara Gibbons (Veterans Justice Program Social Worker)
Walk-ins are welcomed

Wilmington VA Medical Center
Building 5, Room 119
1601 Kirkwood Highway
Wilmington DE 19805

December 9, 2025
11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Wilmington VA Medical Center

BUSINESS *of the Quarter*



Reins of Honor is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit operating out of Townsend, Delaware, on 17 acres, dedicated to supporting Military members, Veterans, and their families through Equine Assisted Psychotherapy and equine-focused activities.

After serving all populations in Delaware, we witnessed the profound healing effects horses provide to the Military community. As a military family, with the support of our community, we decided to focus exclusively on Military and Veterans through Reins of Honor. Our name comes from the United States Air Force Pararescuemen (PJs) creed, "Return with Honor." Reins guide horses, symbolizing our mission to provide guidance, trust, and support to those who have served.

Founded by Chris Wise, Retired USAF, his wife Elena Wise, and USAF Veteran Lisa Stonesifer, Reins of Honor provides services at no cost. The team includes Master's Level Clinicians from Military families who are committed to offering a safe, nonjudgmental space where service members can explore healing through horses.

We offer Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP), a co-facilitated model integrating horses into therapy to help clients develop emotional regulation, address PTSD symptoms, build trust, and navigate life challenges. Equine Connection Sessions allow one-on-one interaction with a certified Equine Specialist to learn horsemanship, build confidence, and foster self-awareness. Group opportunities and horse visits are available, tailored to team-building or experiential learning needs.

Our five equine partners, ranging from 3 to 36 years old, provide honest, nonverbal feedback, helping veterans understand themselves and others. Working with horses builds presence, emotional regulation, confidence, and leadership skills.



Website: reinsofhonor.org
Email: reinsofhonor@gmail.com
Phone: 302.218.1463

Studies show equine-assisted therapy can reduce symptoms of PTSD, anxiety, depression, and substance use, offering an empowering alternative to traditional talk therapy.

Our serene 17-acre environment in Townsend allows clients to connect with horses in a peaceful, supportive setting. Veterans and service members engage in activities like grooming, groundwork, and observation, translating lessons learned with horses into daily life.

Reach out to schedule a session, group experience, or horse visit.

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Give your beloved veteran the recognition they deserve by having their name immortalized on a beautifully crafted brick paver. These engraved bricks will stand the test of time, ensuring your hero's legacy lives on for generations to come.

In 2026 more bricks will be added to the Veterans Legacy Bricks Memorial that opened back in Summer 2024 at North East Community Park.

Order Deadline: January 31, 2026
Brick Options & Ordering Process...

9" x 6" Brick (Horizontal) - \$75

- 4 lines of 17 character personalization.
- Spaces and punctuation count in the character total.
- Brick paver examples pictured just below.



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of the
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then fill out the form and either email it back
or mail the physical form(s) to:
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106 S. Main Street
North East 21901

then, pay for your brick(s) online, please visit:
www.NorthEastMD.org/legacybricks

**There is
an Annual
Salute to
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several
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Questions? Please Contact

Deana Ittner
410-287-5801 Ext. 7106
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