



## Durham Crisis Intervention Team

Observe, listen, create a plan, communicate and connect

### Murder-suicide Brings to Light PTSD Struggles

From the Daytona Beach News Journal

BY LYDA LONGA

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#### Collaborating Agencies:

- Durham County Sheriff's Department
- City of Durham's Police Department
- Durham County Detention Officers
- Veteran's Administration
- Duke University Campus Police
- N.C.C.U. Campus Police
- Durham Technical Community College Police Department
- NAMI
- The Durham Center

It's not clear if Jason Pemberton — the Iraq veteran who shot and killed his wife, then himself — ever sought help for the combat post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that gripped him, friends and a relative said.

On Monday, veterans of both the Vietnam and Iraq wars said it's difficult for those returning home from battle to admit defeat in the face of a mental disorder such as combat PTSD.

Police said Pemberton, a 28-year-old Army veteran who served three tours and was awarded three Purple Hearts for his wounds, shot his wife, Tiffany Pemberton, with a rifle on Saturday; he then turned the gun on himself. The bodies of the couple were found Sunday in their Daytona Beach apartment.

None of the veterans who spoke with The Daytona Beach News-Journal on Monday were surprised it happened.

There is often a stigma attached to seeking help from the Department of Veterans Affairs because many veterans — especially younger ones — believe asking for assistance from the VA means "something is wrong with you," said Charles Tubbs, a spokesman with the VA in Orlando.

Those with post traumatic stress disorder believe their lives or others' lives are in danger, according to the VA. They may feel fearful or think they have no control over their lives. Several factors in a combat situation can contribute to PTSD, including what a soldier does in the war, the politics around the war, where it's fought, and the type of enemy a soldier faces.

According to the VA, PTSD occurs in 11 percent to 20 percent of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan; in 10 percent of Gulf War veterans; and in 30 percent of Vietnam veterans.

The problems arise mostly when a veteran comes home, a handful of veterans said Monday.

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Most of his family served, or still serves in the military. And he hailed from an Alabama town of about 3,400 people called Evergreen, where “no one badmouths the military” and where everyone is pretty much expected to join it, Darrell Pemberton said. Jason Pemberton joined the Army at the age of 18.

“He (Jason) was a forward scout, the one that went in ahead of everyone else and gathered intelligence and radioed back,” Darrell Pemberton said Monday of his nephew. “He was also a sniper.”

The soldier met his 25-year-old bride Tiffany Selvia Pemberton in North Carolina when Pemberton was stationed at Fort Bragg, Darrell Pemberton said. The couple married a little over a year ago and moved to Daytona Beach in January or February 2011 so Jason Pemberton could attend WyoTech near Ormond Beach and study motorcycle mechanics, Darrel Pemberton said.

Tiffany Pemberton was a homemaker who doted on her husband, as well as on a Chihuahua puppy the couple had just gotten recently, the uncle said.

“She always had a smile on her face,” he said of Tiffany Pemberton. “She was a happy girl.”

The tragedy at Jason Pemberton’s apartment this weekend devastated Bunn, who was Jason Pemberton’s lab partner at WyoTech.

Bunn, the president of WyoTech’s veteran students’ group, said he sees too many veterans at the school who come in looking lost.

### **Upcoming CIT Class Schedule:**

**March 12-16:** Sponsored by Duke PD

Location- Duke PD

**June 11-15:** Sponsored by Durham PD

Location- Durham PD Headquarters- Comstat Room

**September 10-14:** Sponsored by Durham Co. Sheriff’s Office

Location: TBD

**November 5-9:** Sponsored By Durham Tech PD

Location: TBD

**If you want to enroll in any class, please contact Cpl. Mark Morais to determine availability at 560-4438 x29462 or mark.morais@durhamnc.gov.**

“You can see the vacant look in their eyes as they probably wonder, ‘What am I going to do next?’ ” Bunn said, his voice wavering. “You’re no good to anyone anymore, you’re no good to your community anymore.”

Bunn and 65 other veterans at the school belong to Student Veterans of America, a support group of sorts that meets twice a month. Members discuss services and benefits and try to make sure veterans are taking advantage of as many services as possible.

But the veteran must want the help, said Mike White, director of Veterans Services for Volusia County, himself a Vietnam veteran.

Tubbs of the Orlando VA said the federal agency offers dozens of programs for veterans, but many veterans may not know which programs best fit their situations.

“The message we want to put out there is, if you served, you can come to the VA for help,” Tubbs said. “Those who seek help will find out that they’re not the only ones dealing with their issue. We want folks to understand that they are still our heroes.”

## SPOTLIGHT

### CODE 5/ 5R

#### \*REMINDERS\*

**If a call concerns a mental health concern in any way, clear the call 10-24, code 5.**

**If the call requires an incident or arrest report, clear 10-24, code 5R.**

**All referrals should be supported with a CIT Report as well.**



#### Meet Felishia McPherson.

Felishia is assuming the position of NAMI- CIT Representative formerly held by Linda Burkhart, who moved back to Texas last fall.

Felishia works in the Durham Center's Care Coordination Unit as a Community Specialist Liaison and is a North Carolina Peer Support Specialist with Recovery Innovation's Wellness City. She holds a Masters Degree from Webster University and is currently pursuing licensure in Substance Abuse Counseling. She brings a wealth of life experiences to the table. We certainly look forward to continued collaborations with NAMI Durham and working in partnership with Felicia to support CIT ideals, consumers and families. Welcome aboard, Felishia!

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**Tell us about the great job your officers do every day.**

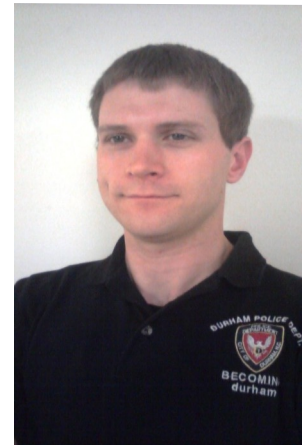
**We want to know!!**

**Email Sgt. Lori Ray:**

**Lori.Ray@durhamnc.gov**

**Investigator Paul Clark** has joined the staff of BECOMING Durham. Paul was previously assigned to Uniform Patrol, District 4. He holds a degree in Communication Studies and Political Science from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Paul has been busy preparing tools and resources that will be useful in assisting the BECOMING population. He is excited about the relationship between the Durham Police Department and BECOMING Durham. BECOMING is a

six-year federal grant program that will serve disconnected and TAY, (transitional age youth) ages 16-21. Investigator Clark has already taken referrals from officers and has successfully connected consumers to support services to help address life challenges. More information on BECOMING Durham can be viewed on Facebook as Becoming Durham or [www.becomingdurham.org](http://www.becomingdurham.org).



**Resource  
Spotlight**



***Heritage Square Shopping Center - 401 E. Lakewood Ave., Suite E 1-A***

***Open: Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri 12-7pm; Wed 12-5pm; Sat 1-5pm***

***On DATA Bus Routes #5, 7 and 8 For Information, call 919-687-4041***

***Wellness City*** is a "recovery education center" that offers classes and activities for any adult who is on the road to recovery from mental health and/or substance use challenges. We offer a wide variety of classes: steps in recovery, knowing your emotions, WRAP, anger management, women's and men's discussion groups, writing for wellness, yoga, meditation, drum circle, drawing, etc.

All the classes and activities at *Wellness City* are free. Participants do not need to have a diagnosis or even identify as having a "problem." They do not need a referral or insurance. All they need is an interest in learning more about their own personal strengths and how they can use those strengths to have more wellness in their everyday lives.

*At Wellness City, Recovery is: remembering who you are and using your strengths to be all you were meant to be.*

Many people come to *Wellness City* looking for "someone to talk to." All of the staff at *Wellness City* are NC Certified Peer Support Specialists (PSS). A PSS is someone with their own lived experience of mental health and/or substance use challenges, who is in recovery themselves, and who has received extensive training in how to provide support and encouragement to others on the path to recovery. The PSS staff are the living example, the "evidence", that recovery is real.

*Wellness City* recently opened a telephone **Support Line**. The Support Line is staffed by Peer Support Specialists who are available from 3:00-11:00 p.m. every day of the year to provide support over the phone. A referral process is currently being developed with law enforcement, EMS, etc. If you know of someone who would like to receive a call from the Support Line, please contact Kimberly Chansen at [kimberly.chansen@recoveryinnovations.org](mailto:kimberly.chansen@recoveryinnovations.org).

*Are you experiencing a mental health crisis?*

*Would you like to talk with a trained Peer Support Specialist who is in recovery in their own life?*

**Caring, non-judgmental help is available 3:00-11:00 p.m., 7 days a week**

**Recovery Support Line- (919) 956-9566**

## Involuntary Commitment/ Emergency Commitment Process

### What is the definition of "Danger to self or other"?

Consider the following definitions when articulating an Emergency or IVC Commitment

#### *Danger to self-*

Within the relevant past, the individual has acted in such a way as to show: that he would be unable without care, supervision and the continued assistance of others not otherwise available, to exercise self control, judgment, or discretion in the conduct of his daily responsibilities and social relations or to satisfy his need for nourishment, personal or medical care, shelter, or self protection and safety, or

There is a reasonable probability of the individual suffering serious physical debilitation within the near future unless adequate treatment is given. A showing of behavior that is grossly irrational or that the individual is unable to control behavior that is grossly inappropriate to the situation or other evidence of severely impaired insight and judgment creates a prima facie inference that the individual is unable to care for self.

#### *Danger to others:*

Within the relevant past the individual has inflicted, attempted to inflict, or threatened to inflict serious bodily harm on another, or has acted in such a way to create a substantial risk serious bodily harm to another or has engaged in extreme destruction of property.

There is reasonable probability that this conduct will be repeated.

Previous episodes of dangerousness to others may be considered in determining reasonable probability.

## Training Updates

The winter season was quite busy for the mental health team who coordinated and participated in various training workshops. Additional training sessions for officers and partners will be offered during the year.

In December, Durham Police Department (DPD) investigators were updated on current mental health trends and grant referring processes. In January, EMS attended a day-long training on mental health concerns, first responder stress, and community resources.

In development stage is a block of instruction for the DPD Police Academy on mental health symptoms, verbal de-escalation and safety tactics when responding to mental health calls for service. The 40- hour CIT course is getting a curriculum update to include a new juvenile piece in response to the Durham BECOMING grant. Also planned are classes for Durham Public Schools (DPS)/School Resource Officers and other agencies that will be working with the Juvenile BECOMING population. Stay tuned for details on these and other training opportunities.

### ***Collaborating Agencies Contact Information***

**Durham Police Department:**

Sgt. L. Ray  
919-560-4438 x 29227  
[lori.ray@durhamnc.gov](mailto:lori.ray@durhamnc.gov)

Cpl. M. Morais  
919-560-4438 x29462  
[mark.morais@durhamnc.gov](mailto:mark.morais@durhamnc.gov)

**NAMI Durham Hotline-**  
919-231-5016 (non-crisis)

**North Carolina Central University  
Police Department:**

Captain A.J. Carter  
919-530-7365  
[acararter@ncceu.edu](mailto:acararter@ncceu.edu)

**Durham County Sheriff's Office:**

Captain Stan Harris  
919-560-0897  
[seharris@durhamsheriff.org](mailto:seharris@durhamsheriff.org)

**Durham Tech Community College Police:**

Chief Sarah Minnis  
919-536-7200 x5504  
[minniss@durhamtech.edu](mailto:minniss@durhamtech.edu)

**Duke University Police Department:**

Captain M. Linton  
919-681-4370 or 812-2920  
[Michael.linton@duke.edu](mailto:Michael.linton@duke.edu)

**Veterans Administration Police:**

Sgt. J. Fordham  
919-286-0411 x 4078

**Durham Co. Detention Officers:**

Capt. Elijah Bazemore  
919-560-0962  
[ebazemore@durhamsheriff.org](mailto:ebazemore@durhamsheriff.org)

**The Durham Center (560-7100 )**

Jennifer Meade  
919-560-7201  
[jmeade@co.durham.nc.us](mailto:jmeade@co.durham.nc.us)