

We Honor Veterans Newsletter



April 2021 Edition

Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day

Gilchrist's Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration occurred on Sunday, March 28, 2021. This is a day to honor and thank the men and women who served during the Vietnam War. This Welcome Home celebration honors the veterans in our care as well as all of the veterans and their loved ones.

Due to the pandemic, Gilchrist presented the program online. Invitations to join this recognition of Vietnam era veterans were sent across Maryland and the United States. Hundreds of Vietnam era veterans joined to watch a powerful video meant to honor their military service.

In the video, we were honored to have **Joe Galloway**, America's premier war and foreign correspondent and co-author of the national bestseller "We Were Soldiers Once...And Young". Additionally, the program included **Jan Scruggs**, founder of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, active-duty military from Fort George G. Meade, patriotic music, and **Kimberly Mitchell** who shared her story of how an airman fell in love with an orphaned infant during the Vietnam war, brought her back to the US, and how she dedicates her life to service of her country and her fellow veterans.

There were even watch parties. The Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter 965 met at the Wells McComas VFW Post 2678 to watch the online program. About 50 members were there to honor Vietnam era veterans.

The online video is available through the Gilchrist website. Please watch this video and share the link with family and friends. Here is the link:

[Welcome Home Celebration for Vietnam Veterans | Gilchrist \(gilchristcares.org\)](https://gilchristcares.org)

Feedback on this program to honor Vietnam era veterans has been very positive:

No matter how many times this year's offering is viewed, it is as though you are watching it for the first time. Forrest, Galloway, Scruggs, Astle are all the real deal, as well as all who have attended the three major events held live. In the end this video achieved its purpose as far as I am concerned. With that said, I must say that for Gilchrist to thank those of us who are veterans of the Vietnam War for attending today was, well sort of backwards. It is we, the 175,000 Marylanders and the thousands more who were there, who owe you and Gilchrist the thanks for the preceding years of outreach and for what you will continue to do year after year. Thank you and God Bless!

George W. Owings III, Secretary, MD Department of Veterans Affairs

The Welcome Home program was great, really enjoyed Kimberly's and Joe's episodes, amazing stories. Made me feel honored to have served my country in Vietnam. The men and women vets who honor the service of vets in hospice have my greatest respect. Thank you, Gilchrist, for honoring all Vietnam Veterans each year. And Welcome Home to all our Vietnam Veterans.

Keith F. Kelley 67-68 USAF (Maryland)

Thank you for your efforts and support for this wonderful tribute to Vietnam Veterans. The interviews and stories from each person brought tears to my eyes and a great sense of gratitude. A wonderful sense of healing emerged as I listened to Kim and Joe's experiences. Additionally, the pictures of the Wall and our 'troops' serving others carries a message of redemption to and for all who were involved in Vietnam. I am very proud to be a part of the Gilchrist team and organization. Love and Respect

Tim Price 68-71 USA (Maryland)

What an impressive ceremony! I knew a fair amount about Ia Drang, but seeing it through Galloway's eyes was truly special. And listening to Kimberly Mitchell tell her story was nothing less than inspirational.

Steve Stubbs USAF 79-88 (Georgia)

We need your help! Feedback about our annual Welcome Home event has reinforced our commitment to support and honor Vietnam era veterans. Our mission is to get this video to every Vietnam veteran and their loved ones. Won't you help? Please post our link on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc. Contact your fellow veterans, friends, and family members and ask them to help us reach every Vietnam veteran they know and encourage them to watch this film.

Watch this space! Check the Gilchrist website for information about the next Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day celebration scheduled for March 2022.



Honoring Veterans - It's All in the Family

This is a wonderful story about a family dedicated to honoring veterans. Our story begins with Marshall Forbes Sr. Marshall Forbes Sr was in the Army and served in Vietnam. Sadly, Marshall became ill back in 2011 and passed away in 2014. Before his death, Marshall was honored with a Salute to Service Tribute (SST) by staff and volunteers of Hospice of the Chesapeake.

About that same time, Marshall's wife Gloria was asked to testify before the Maryland House of Delegates. Senator John Astle (Marine and Vietnam veteran) was working on the Welcome Home Vietnam Celebration Day Bill. With the support of people like Gloria, Senator Astle was successful and in 2015 Governor Hogan signed Senate Bill 80 and House Bill 1118, establishing March 30 as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day."

Now we meet Lisa Payne – Gloria's daughter. Her mother-in-law is Donna Payne. Donna loves to crochet and, after learning about Marshall's SST, decided to begin making afghans for Gilchrist. These afghans are given to veterans as part of the hundreds of tributes Gilchrist conducts each year. Since embarking on her mission to support veterans in 2015, Donna estimates she has made over 1,000 afghans!

This family has a rich military history and they continue to support veterans every

day.



Gloria Forbes (left) and Donna Payne show off several of Donna's afghans



Governor Larry Hogan signing the Welcome Home Vietnam Celebration Day Bill on March 30, 2015. Gloria and Lisa are holding photos of their Vietnam veterans.

Henry Bernstein

Henry Bernstein was just 17 when he tried to enlist in the Army after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, but was rejected because he had not fully recovered from a recent operation. Later, he was inducted in 1943, and after basic training at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, was stationed at Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, which served as a prisoner of war camp for 3,000 German soldiers.

In 1944, Henry was assigned to the 56th Armored Engineer Battalion (AEB), which was part of the 11th Armored Division, nicknamed the "Thunderbolt" division. Sometime after D-Day, he shipped out to Europe on a Navy transport ship. During the crossing of the Atlantic, his convoy was attacked by German U-boats, sinking several of the escort ships.

After arriving in Le Havre, France, Henry was assigned to the AEB's 3rd Platoon. The platoon cleared minefields, built roads and bridges, and performed other tasks in support

of the armored units moving across France, Belgium, Germany and Austria. Henry recalls that his unit had many combat veterans, so that despite coming under enemy fire, "I felt pretty safe with them."

On May 6, 1945, the 11th Armored Division liberated the Mauthausen concentration camp. Henry's unit was in the camp briefly, leaving behind medical personnel to treat the prisoners. Henry remembers a prisoner asking for help contacting a daughter in Brooklyn, and emaciated prisoners getting sick from eating food too quickly.

Henry's platoon had pulled into the outskirts of Linz, Austria when they received word that the war was over. For the next year, he served as part of the occupation forces in Germany, initially as a recruiter and later (despite having no musical training) in the 4th Armored Division's band. It was during this time that Henry attended a session of the famous Nuremberg Trials.

After he returned home, Henry joined the Army reserve, and then transferred to the Maryland Army National Guard. During his 30+ year career in the National Guard, he served in the 1st Missile Battalion, 70th Artillery, which was a nuclear missile site in Granite, Maryland that defended the Washington-Baltimore region, and later was stationed at the Guard's headquarters at Baltimore's Fifth Regiment Armory. Henry retired from the National Guard in 1982 as a Chief Warrant Officer.

Henry Bernstein was honored by Gilchrist earlier this year with a virtual Salute to Service Tribute.



Henry Bernstein being honored by a team of Gilchrist military veteran volunteers



Henry Bernstein in uniform

Marine Guards Crypt of John Paul Jones

Jerry "Jer" Beattie was born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In June 1954, after graduating from Schenley High School at age 19, Jer enlisted in the Marine Corps and was sent to Parris Island, South Carolina for boot camp. After graduating from boot camp, he was stationed at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, for training in communications. Upon completion of his training, Jer requested a transfer and was sent to Annapolis, Maryland.

Jerry Beattie was assigned guard duty at crypt of John Paul Jones at the United States Naval Academy. John Paul Jones has been lauded since 1775 as the Father of the US Navy. The corporal remains of John Paul Jones were interred into the crypt at the Naval Academy in 1906 in a ceremony presided over by President Theodore Roosevelt. For a number of years, the crypt was guarded by Marines. Jer was always proud to have been one of the Marines guarding the crypt. Jer was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps on June 29, 1956.

Jer met his future wife, Shirley Agnes Heckrotte, at a USO dance while he was in the Marine Corps. They married in Baltimore in April 1957 and returned to Pittsburgh where they had one daughter, Tawny Anne Beattie. The family was there for 10 years before moving back to Maryland.

Jer worked for several well-known companies in Pittsburgh and in Maryland. He went into business for himself in 1970 professionally cleaning various business offices as well as the offices of doctors and dentists. Jer successfully operated his business for 40 years before retiring in May of 2010 at the age of 75.

Jer's lifetime passion was art, including watercolor paintings, pen and ink and charcoal drawings, and etchings. Jer studied fine art for five years at the Schuler School of Fine Arts in Baltimore and studied etching and printmaking for one year at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia.

Jerry Beattie credits the person he became to the Marine Corps. He is proud to have served his country as a United States Marine. And Gilchrist veteran volunteers were proud to honor Jerry's service earlier this year with a Salute to Service Tribute.



Jerry Beattie's USMC Boot Camp Photo



Jerry Beattie and proud daughter Tawny

Lt Col Donald Hagner, ANG, (Ret)

Donald "Don" Hagner enlisted in the Army and served for four years. While in Vietnam, 1st Lt Don Hagner worked in military intelligence and received the Bronze Star Medal for heroism in ground combat. Don left the Army as a Captain and then enlisted in the Air National Guard (ANG). He worked as a mechanical engineer with an ANG civil engineering unit. Don served in the ANG for 28 years, retiring as a Lt Col.

Don met Elaine on a blind date and they were married in 1971. They have two daughters – Dana who is a teacher and Elizabeth who enlisted in the Marine Corps.

On March 20, 2021 Don was honored with a Salute to Service Tribute (SST). A team of military veteran volunteers from Gilchrist along with a music therapist and social worker conducted the SST in Don and Elaine's home. Joining the tribute over Zoom were many of Don's friends and ANG colleagues.

As part of the tribute, Col Dan Eagan, ANG, (Ret), talked about Don's military service and shared a number of photos of Don serving his country. Col Eagan presented Don with a Civilian Service Medal from the US Army Garrison Carlisle Barracks Commander.

Don received a We Honor Veterans pin, a Vietnam 50th Anniversary pin, a certificate, and a handmade blanket in the colors of the Vietnam Campaign Ribbon. Elaine received a

Proud Wife of a Veteran pin and a patriotic scarf. The tribute included an opening prayer, music, readings and concluded with a formal salute, closing prayer and the singing of God Bless America. Friends and colleagues on Zoom then shared greetings with Don and Elaine.

Following the tribute, one of the veteran volunteers commented: "It is an honor to recognize the military service of someone who dedicated their life to serving others."



Lt Col Don Hagner with Gilchrist veteran volunteers along with daughter Elizabeth and Col Dan Eagan, ANG, (Ret)



Lt Col Donald Hagner with Daughter Elizabeth Ann Hagner

Vietnam Vet Radio

Vietnam Vet Radio is an internet only radio station dedicated to the men and women who served in the Vietnam War, their families, and friends. They are incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit veterans ministry organization. With a few exceptions all the songs played are from the Vietnam War era.

They also play the authentic jingles and public service announcements that were played on AFVN (American Forces Vietnam Network) Radio. If you served in Vietnam and listened to AFVN, then you will enjoy this online radio station.

<https://vietnamvetradio.org/>



National World War I Memorial - April 16

The U.S. flag will be raised above the soon to open National World War I Memorial in Washington D.C. during a live broadcast April 16.

Set to begin at 10 a.m. Eastern Time, the 75 minute broadcast will feature Oscar nominee Gary Sinise, as well as performances from the U.S. Army's Band "Pershing's Own", the 369th Regiment Harlem Hellfighters Tribute Band and the original cast of the musical "Hello Girls". Viewers will also hear insights from elected officials, military leaders, members of the U.S. World War One Centennial Commission and the memorials design team.

For more information and to register to attend virtually, go to:

<https://firstcolors.worldwar1centennial.org>

Uniform Smiles

A general is sitting in his jeep on the side of the road when a lieutenant pulls up, hops out, and asks, "Jeep stuck?"

The general hands the Lt. his keys, slides into his jeep, and says, "Nope. But, yours is."

Please Share

If you enjoyed reading this edition, please forward a copy to other veterans that you know so that they can also enjoy the newsletter. If you are reading a shared copy and would like to receive your own copy of future editions, please send an email with your request to wehonorveterans@gilchristcares.org.

Looking For a Few Good Volunteers

Would you like to be a Gilchrist volunteer? We are always looking for volunteers – especially those who have military experience. Our military veteran volunteers are involved in Salute to Service Tributes for veterans under hospice care, visiting public schools to talk about military service, meeting with veterans to talk about their military service, supporting our annual Welcome Home event for Vietnam Veterans, and many other activities.

If you would like to learn how to become a volunteer, contact Gilchrist at wehonorveterans@gilchristcares.org.

We Want Your Input

If you have suggestions for content you would like to see in future issues of the Gilchrist We Honor Veterans Newsletter, please contact us at wehonorveterans@gilchristcares.org.

