

We Honor Veterans Newsletter



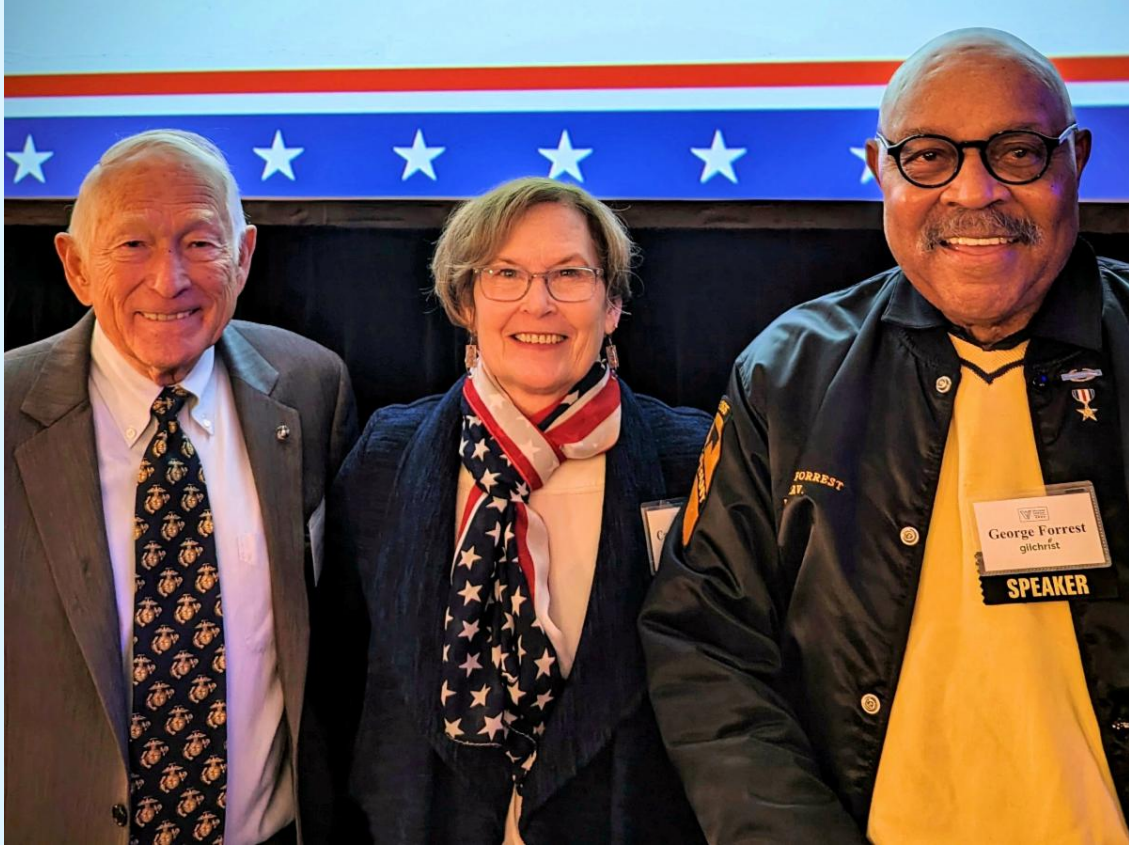
April 2023 Edition

2023 Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration

Gilchrist's Fifth annual Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration was held on March 25th. There were about 550 attendees along with 100 active-duty military personnel.

Vietnam War Veteran and four-time Super Bowl Champion Rocky Bleier was the keynote speaker. Rocky shared his story beginning with high school football, playing for Notre Dame and getting drafted by the Pittsburgh Steelers. Drafted into the Army, Rocky was injured in Vietnam and was told he would never be able to play football again. The rest is history. Rocky's energetic, moving and humorous presentation was well received by the participants.

Mark your calendar for March of 2024 and plan to attend Gilchrist's Sixth annual Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration. Check the Gilchrist website and future editions of this newsletter for the specific date for the event.



Gilchrist President Cathy Hamel with Masters of Ceremonies John Astle (L) and George Forrest



Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration



Pinning of a Vietnam Veteran



The Marines have landed!



Present Arms!



Rocky Bleier (L) visiting with Air Force and Vietnam Veteran Keith Kelley

Navy Corpsman John "Steve" Scarlis

Hospital Corpsman John "Steve" Scarlis served his entire time in the Navy at Chelsea

Naval Hospital in Boston. It was there he met his wife, a nurse at a nearby hospital. They have been together for 55 years.

Steve was recently honored with a Salute to Service Tribute conducted by Gilchrist military veteran volunteers. Jillian Tolman, Gilchrist Music Therapist also attended and sang patriotic and military songs.

As part of the tribute, Steve received the We Honor Veterans pin from the Veterans Administration, a certificate from Gilchrist, a patriotic blanket made by a Gilchrist volunteer, and a thank-you card from a school student. A large number of family members were in attendance as Navy Corpsman Scarlis was honored for his service to our country. The tribute concluded with an honor salute presented by the veteran volunteers. Corpsman Scarlis proudly returned the salute.



Navy Veteran Robert Ervin

Robert Ervin was originally from Albuquerque, New Mexico. Robert enlisted in the Navy at age 18 after graduating from high school. He served in the Navy from 1949-1953. Robert spent most of his time in the Navy as a mechanic based in San Diego.

Robert was recently honored by Gilchrist with a Salute to Service Tribute. During the tribute, he received the We Honor Veterans pin from the Veterans Administration, a certificate from Gilchrist, a patriotic blanket made by a Gilchrist volunteer, and a thank-you card made by an elementary school student. At the conclusion of the tribute, the veterans presented Mr. Ervin an honor salute.



Robert Ervin



Robert Ervin Honored by Gilchrist Team

WWII Veteran John Arthur Wright

This story written by Betty L. Wright Kreder

John Arthur Wright started life on October 25, 1925, on the Lindsay P. Gillis dairy farm in California, Pennsylvania. The Gillis family was his mother's side of the family. Dad's father died before he was two years old, and his mother died when he was fourteen. His grandparents Wright took in Dad and his brother after their parents passed.

Dad graduated from East Pike Run High School in 1943. He was seventeen and WWII was raging. Turning 18 in October 1943 he did not have the six months needed to be part of the war production effort that would have exempted him from military service. Dad did what just about every young man did. He went to enlist and ended up being drafted. Dad was selected for the Army Air Corps. His job was to fly in bombers and operate a new technology for planes, radar. He served in the Pacific Theater on the island of Morotai in the 13th Air Force, 307th Bomb Group, 424th Squadron.

Dad had less than two years in theater and the war ended. One of the pastimes for troops awaiting flights home was playing football. One day while playing, Dad's leg slipped into a hole and snap! His left femur was broken, and he ended up in a body cast. This prevented Dad from shipping home with his unit. Turned out the broken leg was a blessing in disguise as the plane he was to fly home on crashed on takeoff after a refueling stop. Everyone on board was killed in the crash.

Dad was discharged from active duty in 1946. WWII changed the course of his life and Dad never forgot that fact for the rest of his life.

After the war he chose to attend college. For Dad this opportunity would have been out of the question financially. The GI Bill of Rights took care of that issue. Education was his major at California State Teachers College, California Pennsylvania.

Sometime during his college years, he met Marjorie Crouch, the love of his life. They were married on August 8, 1950. In 1952 Dad and Mom moved from Western Pennsylvania to Baltimore, Maryland and started their family. I am the youngest of their three daughters. Mary E. Wright is my oldest sister. Carol W. Bowers is my middle sister.

The majority of Dad's teaching career as an Industrial Arts (Woodshop) teacher was in Baltimore County at Dundalk Senior High, then Golden Ring Junior High and finally Overlea High from 1962 until he retired in 1981. Yes – 30 years teaching, 42 years retired.

Dad loved woodworking. Over the years he created everything from toys to furniture and would tell students he taught them everything they know about woodworking. Not everything he knew.

Dad loved to play golf and was active in the VFW Post 9083 Golf Club. I was told by one of his golf buddies, "I never met anyone who loved golf as much as your dad and was so bad at the game". Even so, Dad loved golfing. He played into his 80's until bad knees forced him to give it up.

Dad was also a gifted saxophonist and clarinetist. He loved to sing. He loved music. After retirement Dad was active in the American Legion Post 183 Balladeers. Dad had a wonderfully dry sense of humor.

I loved hearing his stories. Especially the WWII stories. I followed in his footsteps enlisting in the Army after high school. I became an Army wife and had my daughter Lisa. Lisa followed me enlisting in the Army. She is a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Lisa served in Iraq during the first year of the war with the 101st Airborne Division. This created a special connection with her grandfather. Not often will you find a grandfather-granddaughter war veteran family.

Dad loved his family and was a great husband, a wonderful father and about the best Pap-Pap a granddaughter could have. We will miss him on planet Earth. As Christians my family knows we will be reunited in Heaven with Christ for eternity. He will be missed on Earth.

I am blessed that John Wright is my father.

Betty L. Wright Kreder

John Wright (WWII T/SGT Army Air Forces Pacific Theater) was recently honored with a Salute to Service Tribute conducted by Gilchrist veteran volunteers. This tribute included the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the presentation of a Certificate from Gilchrist, awarding of the We Honor Veterans pin from the VA, the presentation of a handmade patriotic blanket, and a thank-you card made by a Cub Scout. The tribute concluded with a salute from the veterans. John Wright proudly returned the salute.

John Wright 1944



John Wright with the Gilchrist Team

Music Therapy and Support of Veterans

In 2022 Gilchrist veteran volunteers and staff conducted over 300 Salute to Service Tributes to honor veterans under hospice care. At many of these tributes there were music therapists who play and sing the National Anthem and God Bless America as well as patriotic and military songs. These music therapists make these tributes extra special for the veterans and their family members.

Each year the music therapy team conducts a fundraiser to support the important services they provide for Gilchrist patients, including veterans. We invite you to come celebrate the fifth annual fundraiser to support the Gilchrist Music Therapy program. They will once again return to the stage, in person, to bring you an amazing afternoon of music inspired by patients and their families. Gilchrist's very own music therapy team will be featured along with some guest performers in this special concert. The afternoon will also include a dessert reception, door prizes and raffles. This link will take you to the Gilchrist website where you can learn more about this special event and to register. Hope to see you there.

[Music Therapy Event - All You Need is Love | Gilchrist \(gilchristcares.org\)](https://gilchristcares.org)

Welcome Home 50th



The United States of American Vietnam War Commemoration announces a special 50th anniversary event to honor Vietnam veterans. Held **May 11-13, 2023** in Washington, DC, this three-day event will feature ceremonies on the National Mall that will inspire Americans to embrace the sacred responsibility to honor our Vietnam veterans and their families. An Outdoor Multimedia Celebration will portray the story of our Vietnam veterans and the enduring legacy of their service. It will highlight the sacrifices of their families, and the contributions of individual citizens, as well as our allies.

For more information, go to:

[WelcomeHome](#) | [Welcome Home!](#) | [Vietnam War Commemoration \(vietnamwar50th.com\)](#)

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States.

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in the United States. The Lifeline team is committed to improving crisis services and advancing suicide prevention by empowering individuals, advancing professional best practices, and building awareness.

How To Help

Ask and listen. Be an active part of your loved ones' support systems and check in with them often. If they show any warning signs for suicide, be direct. Tell them it's OK to talk about suicidal feelings. Practice active listening techniques and let them talk without judgment.

Get them help and take care of yourself. Don't be afraid to get your loved one the help they might need. The Lifeline and Veterans Crisis Line are always here to talk or chat, both for crisis intervention and to support friends and loved ones. For additional support, look into [VA Caregiver Support Program Home](#)

Be there. Everyone deals with pain differently. A simple act of kindness to the veteran or service member in your life can help that person feel less alone.

Uniform Smiles

During deployment on the Aircraft Carrier Midway, there was an inspection by a visiting admiral.

All Navy and Marine personnel lined up in formation for the admiral. While walking past several Sailors asking questions and receiving appropriate answers, the admiral stopped in front of a Marine and asked, "What's the first thing you do after hearing "Man Overboard?"

Without hesitation, the Marine asked, "Officer or Enlisted?"

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.



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