



We Honor Veterans Newsletter



July 2023 Edition

2024 Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration

Gilchrist's annual Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration is a day to honor and thank the men and women in our community 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 in our community. This celebration is one of the many ways Gilchrist recognizes the unique needs of veterans and thanks them for their sacrifice and service to our state and our country.

The 2024 event will be held on Sunday, April 7th.

Mark your calendar and watch the Gilchrist website (link below) for more information in the coming months. Go to "Events" and you will see the link to the "Welcome Home Celebration."

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

Operation Gratitude

Gilchrist's veteran volunteers visit schools and scout groups to share their stories about service to our country. In return, the children make cards of gratitude that are given to veterans under hospice care during Salute to Service Tributes. Operation gratitude is our way of engaging younger generations to honor and pay tribute to our veterans.



Veterans in an Elementary School



Cub Scouts making Thank You Cards for Veterans



Gilchrist Team at Hampstead Academy

Reducing Veteran Suicide

Veterans die by suicide at a higher rate than non-Veterans. Veteran suicide rates consistently increased between 2001 and 2018, and while Veteran suicide rates decreased at a faster pace than non-Veteran rates between 2018 and 2020, Veteran suicide rates continue to exceed those of non-Veterans. There are important differences between the Veteran and non-Veteran populations that may help to explain these disparate suicide rates.

Understanding risk and protective factors is important to preventing Veteran suicides. “From Science to Practice” is a series of products designed to communicate the research in an easy-to-understand and quick-to-read format for clinicians and other stakeholders within VA and partnering organizations.

The latest issues address “Loneliness and Social Isolation – Risk Factors for Suicide and

Ways Veterans Differ from the General Population.”

[Ways Veterans Differ from the General Population \(va.gov\)](https://www.va.gov)

Loneliness and social isolation

- Loneliness is among the strongest predictors of suicidal ideation, suicide attempts and other suicidal behavior. Furthermore, loneliness and social isolation have been linked to other physical and mental health outcomes.
- Loneliness may also be more closely associated with suicidality and poor mental health than other aspects of social connection, such as perceptions of social support and interpersonal conflict.
- Loneliness is common among Veterans, with one study finding that more than half of Veterans felt lonely some of the time or often. Veterans in particular may face barriers to involving others in their mental health care, such as feeling as though they would be a burden or a desire for self-reliance.

Screening for loneliness among Veterans with mental health conditions may help identify those at risk for suicidal behavior. Resources such as the [Veterans Crisis Line](#) and [VA Reach Out](#) are available to help Veterans experiencing loneliness.

Want to know how you can help? [Read](#) “From Science to Practice” on “Loneliness and Social Isolation – Risk Factors for Suicide.”

Hervey Smith - Morse Code Interceptor

Hervey Hill Smith III was born in Dunn, North Carolina in 1935. Hervey enlisted in the Army in 1953 after graduation from high school. Following extensive training in Morse code, Hervey was stationed in Germany with the Army Security Agency working as a Morse code interceptor. Each day Hervey would put on his headphones and try and intercept Morse code transmissions between various countries in Europe, Russia, and other parts of the world. These messages in Morse code were translated into English and then sent to the Army’s intelligence services for review and action if required.

Hervey was recently honored with a Salute to Service Tribute conducted by a team of Gilchrist military veteran volunteers. The tribute included opening and closing prayers, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the presentation of a certificate from Gilchrist. Hervey was presented with the We Honor Veterans pin from the Veterans Administration, a patriotic lap blanket made by a Gilchrist volunteer, and a handmade thank-you card from a Cub Scout. The tribute concluded with a formal salute presented by the military team. Hervey proudly returned the salute.

Talking with Hervey prior to the tribute, Army/Vietnam Veteran Tim Price learned that Hervey no longer had an Army cap to wear. Tim was able to find an Army Security Agency cap. As part of Hervey’s 88th birthday celebration with his family, Tim and two other Gilchrist volunteers were there to present the cap to Hervey. Hervey beamed with pride as he once again saluted his military brothers.



Hervey Smith after Boot Camp



Hervey Smith with his new Army Cap



Hervey Smith Honored by Gilchrist Team

Marine Corps, Army & Air National Guard Vet

Roy Lee Hutchison enlisted in the Marine Corps and served four years. Several years after being discharged, Roy enlisted in the Army for two years. After leaving the Army, Roy enlisted in the Air National Guard. When asked why he served in the three branches, Roy said he just wanted to see what they were like.

Roy was recently honored with a Salute to Service Tribute by a team of Gilchrist military veteran volunteers. Surrounded by his wife Phyllis, six children and many grandchildren, Roy received a certificate from Gilchrist, the We Honor Veterans Pin from the Veterans

Administration, a patriotic blanket made by a Gilchrist volunteer, a 50th anniversary Vietnam Veteran pin, and a thank-you card made by an elementary school student.

The morning of the tribute, one of Roy's grandchildren drew the Marine Corps emblem on a chalk board (see photo). Wearing his Marine Corps cap and jacket, Roy proudly returned a salute presented by the Gilchrist volunteers.

Roy Lee Hutchison in Marine Corps Boot Camp



Roy Lee Hutchison with Gilchrist Team

Army Veteran Dr. Edwin Gregory

Edwin Gregory was born in Washington, DC on October 13, 1927. He was drafted into the Army in 1946 just after the end of WWII. Edwin spent 20 weeks being trained as a radio operator before being deployed to Germany where he served in the Signal Corps in Frankfurt under General Eisenhower. After completion of his time on the Army, Edwin was discharged at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

Once discharged from the Army, Edwin followed the advice of General Eisenhower and attended Loyola College in Maryland, graduating in the early 1950s. Edwin then attended the Pennsylvania State College of Optometry, graduating in 1955. He passed licensing exams in Maryland, Washington DC, and Virginia. With offers from each jurisdiction, he accepted an offer to practice in his home state of Maryland.

While a young, practicing optometrist, his previous summer employer, the Hamilton Hotel in Ocean City, MD, called to ask if he could work at the hotel over the busy Memorial Day Weekend in 1956. He agreed to do so. That same weekend, MaryEllen Cooleen, from Georgetown, Washington, DC, checked into the Hamilton Hotel with her mother and siblings. Soon after, MaryEllen and Ted (as he was called) started dating. They were married on June 15, 1957. MaryEllen was 20; Ted was soon to be 30 years old. They have been inseparable ever since. Together they raised six children, Maura, Fran, Ed (aka Farrell), Ellen, Peggy (deceased 2014), and Betsy. They have lived happily in the Baltimore area since marrying nearly 66 years ago.

Dr. Gregory had a thriving optometry practice in downtown Baltimore, adding a second office, attached to their home in Baltimore County. Dr. Gregory made house calls, helped generations of families improve their vision, was a pioneer in contact lens fittings, and attracted patients from many states as well as from overseas. He practiced from 1955 until 2015, when he was nearly 88 years old. He loved his occupation, and was highly respected in his field for 60 years.

Because of his love for his patients and of optometry, the good doctor claims he never "really worked" a day in his life. His hobbies include the piano, performing as a pianist in big jazz bands in Washington DC while in high school in the 1940's, prior to being drafted at 18.

Large parties for friends and relatives would not have been complete without Dr. Gregory on the piano, his sister-in law, Pat and brother in-law, Dan on harp, accordion, or vocals. Together, and individually, Dr. Gregory and his wife enjoyed playing tennis (he played into his 80's), skiing (he was in his late fifties when he first took up skiing), gardening, entertaining, and vacationing with their children and 11 cherished grandkids in Ocean City, MD or Bethany Beach, DE for many decades.

Dr. Edwin Gregory has certainly enjoyed a wonderfully full life, with many good friends, a wife, a family, a country he adores, and a career he loved.

Dr. Edwin Gregory was recently honored with a Salute to Service Tribute conducted by Gilchrist military veteran volunteers. The tribute included an opening prayer, the Pledge of Allegiance, and presentation of the We Honor Veterans pin from the Veterans Administration. Edwin was also presented with a certificate from Gilchrist, a handmade patriotic blanket, and a thank-you card made by a school student. The tribute concluded with a formal salute by the military team recognizing Edwin Gregory for his service to our country.



Army Veteran Alan L. Hunt Sr.

Alan L. Hunt Sr. graduated Patterson High School in Baltimore, Maryland in June of 1958. Following graduation from Patterson High School, he enlisted in Maryland Army National Guard's 129th Infantry Division, Baltimore, Maryland and then joined the active-duty Army in September of 1958. Alan was assigned to Fort Dix, New Jersey where he attended Advanced Infantry School. During his training he qualified as an expert marksman with the highest score possible. Alan departed active duty in April of 1959 and reenlisted with Maryland National Guard, 129th Infantry Division in May of 1959. He was honorably discharged in September 1962.

Alan was hired by Bethlehem Steel in Sparrows Point, Maryland where he worked as a Machinist. He also attended night school and obtained a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Maryland in Industrial Education in 1973. Alan was medically retired from Bethlehem Steel in 1993 after recovering from an accident in which a super heater blew up, injuring him and killing his coworker. He sustained 3rd degree burns on approximately 70 percent of his body and underwent multiple surgeries and skin grafts to repair the injuries. Once he was healthy and retired, Alan volunteered as President of numerous parent-teacher associations (PTA) and worked with children in schools.

Alan is the father of eight children including four girls (Kimberly, Tammy, Gina, and Mary) and four boys, all of whom served in the military. Rob served in the Maryland Air National Guard for 15 years, Matt and Mark both on active duty in the Army for 7 years, and Al Jr. served 4 years in the Air Force Reserves and 29 years on active-duty Air Force.

Alan L. Hunt Sr. was recently honored with a Salute to Service Tribute conducted by Gilchrist staff and military veteran volunteers. There were over 40 family members and friends in attendance to join this tribute to thank him for his service to our country. The tribute opened with a prayer. The Gilchrist music therapist then played the National Anthem which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Hunt was then presented with a certificate from Gilchrist, a We Honor Veterans Pin from the Veterans Administration, a handmade patriotic blanket made by a Gilchrist volunteer, and a handmade thank-you card made by a Cub Scout. Following a closing prayer, the music therapist played God Bless America. Alan loves to sing, and it showed as he energetically joined in the singing of God Bless America. When the veterans presented Mr. Hunt with a formal salute, he proudly returned that salute.

Alan L. Hunt Sr. in Uniform





Alan L. Hunt Sr. with Gilchrist Team

Memorial Day Program at HeartLands

Memorial Day (originally known as Decoration Day) is a federal holiday in the United States for honoring and mourning the U.S. military personnel who died while serving in the United States Armed Forces. From 1868 to 1970, it was observed on May 30. Since 1970, it is observed on the last Monday of May.

Many people visit cemeteries and memorials on Memorial Day to honor and mourn those who died while serving in the U.S. military. Many volunteers place American flags on the graves of military personnel in national cemeteries.

This past Memorial Day, a team of 10 Gilchrist veteran volunteers led by Army Veteran Ed Kaplan conducted a Memorial Day program for over 60 residents at HeartLands Senior Living Village in Ellicott City, Maryland. The program included a Memorial Day prayer, the Pledge of Allegiance, the National Anthem, military readings, and the singing of patriotic music. The service concluded with an Honor Salute recognizing those veterans who gave their lives for our country.



Uniform Smiles

A soldier runs up a hill and around a corner before slamming into an officer.

“Where do you think you’re going, son?”

“Sorry, Captain! It’s crazy out there and the firefight was so heavy. I got scared and tried to go AWOL.”

“Who you calling Captain? I’m a General!”

“Wow!” exclaimed the soldier. “I didn’t realize I’d run that far back.”

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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