

We Honor Veterans Newsletter



October 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.

Previous Welcome Home events were very successful. Here are comments from several of those who have attended this special event:

- "Welcoming us Vets home has been a great thing to do for us. Some of the stories helped my wife to understand more of what I/we experienced."
- "The excitement just seeing my fellow Vietnam Veterans again."
- "Thank you for remembering our Vietnam Vets. So many of us are suffering from war related illnesses and this event lets those veterans know that they are not forgotten."

The 2024 event will be held on Sunday, April 7th beginning at 11:30 AM at Martin's West in Baltimore. Mark your calendar and watch the Gilchrist website for more information:

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

Proud Navy Veteran Joseph Hoke

Joseph "Mike" Hoke was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1946. He graduated from Baltimore Polytechnic Institute in 1964 and entered the Navy in 1966. Mike was assigned to the USS Blandy (DD-943) which was a Forrest Sherman-class destroyer. He worked in damage control.

Mike proudly describes the success of the USS Blandy in carrying out their assigned missions off the coast of Vietnam. Upon firing they would release smoke to disguise their

exact location. Mike remembers hearing enemy shrapnel hitting the sides of the ship, although they never took a direct hit. Mike was discharged from the Navy in 1971.

Mike spent most of his civilian life working in automobile sales and management.

Mike met Joyce Engle in 1972 and they were married in 1979. When they first met, they were both working for Pepsi in Baltimore. Joyce would bring Mike donuts every day from a bakery in Hampden. Mike and Joyce had three daughters: Terri, Michele, and Ashley.

In his spare time, Mike liked to play softball, hunt, go trap shooting, and watch NASCAR.

Mike Hoke was recently honored with a Salute to Service Tribute conducted by Gilchrist military veteran volunteers. The tribute included an opening prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. Mike was presented with a certificate from Gilchrist, a patriotic blanket made by a Gilchrist volunteer, and a thank-you card made by a Cub Scout. Mike was pinned with a We Honor Veterans pin and a special Vietnam Veteran pin from the Veterans Administration. Joyce received a Proud Wife of a Veteran pin and a patriotic scarf. Terri, Michele, and Ashley received Proud Family Member of a Veteran pins. Navy veteran and Gilchrist volunteer Rick Uhlig read a poem entitled "When the Last Hand Comes Aboard." Mike proudly returned an honor salute presented by the military team. The tribute concluded with a closing prayer.

Mike always had a contagious smile. Just look at his smile in uniform back in the 60s and at his smile during the tribute. A very proud Navy Veteran.



Joseph Hoke with Gilchrist Veteran Volunteers

Joseph Hoke in Uniform



Marine Charles Robinson

Charles Robinson, from Niagara Falls, New York, served six years in the United States Marine Corps. Charles enlisted at the age of 17 and was discharged from the Marines at the rank of Corporal.

Following his military service, Charles traveled to Israel where he worked on a kibbutz. There, in 1973, he met his future wife, Catherine from France where they were married. The Robinsons relocated to the United States settling in Bowie, Maryland where they raised their family. This year, Charles and Catherine will celebrate their 50th "Golden Wedding" Anniversary.

On June 9, 2023, Gilchrist Military Veterans, Virgil Wright (Marine Corps), Don Kyle (Army), and Ed Kaplan (Army) conducted a Salute-to-Service ceremony coordinated by Gilchrist Clinical Social Worker, Dawn Linthicum, for Charles and his large family and friends at a Westminster, Maryland assisted living facility. Charles was presented with the "We Honor Veterans" commemorative pin from the Veterans Administration, a Certificate of Appreciation, a patriotic handmade lap blanket, and other items. To the veteran and family's delight, Hebrew prayers and blessings were included in the service.

Charles Robinson (L) with Don Kyle and Virgil Wright



Navy Veteran George Hankins

George Hankins was born in Princess Ann, Maryland in 1927. George enlisted in the Navy in 1946 and served in the same division as his twin brother. He was discharged from the Navy in 1948.

George met a young lady by the name of Betty in Ocean City, Maryland in 1948. They were married in June of 1949. George and Betty had two children: Denise and Blair. Blair passed away in August of 2022. Later in life, George married Linda in 1986.

Following the military, George entered the world of banking. He was a banker his entire life at Maryland National Bank where he started as a teller and retired as an executive vice president.

George Hankins is a past Chairman of the Board at Franklin Square Hospital and at the Harriet Lane Clinic at the Johns Hopkins Children's Center. George is also a past president of the Maryland Chapter of the American Red Cross.

George loved family and friends, socializing, dancing, and travelling. George and Linda traveled extensively in the United States in their motorhome with the Good Samaritan Camping Club. He was also an avid golfer.

George Hankins 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. George was presented with the We Honor Veterans pin from the Veterans Administration, a patriotic blanket made by a Gilchrist volunteer, and a handmade thank-you card from a school student. The tribute concluded with a formal salute presented by the Gilchrist team.



George Hankins Honored by Gilchrist Team

Army Sergeant Tyler Willis

Tyler Willis, originally from Northern California near Yosemite National Park, served in the Army as a combat engineer from 1976-1994. Tyler served twice in Germany, once in Korea and on several bases in the United States. After his honorable discharge he worked as a heavy equipment operator in Colorado and Maryland.

Tyler was recently honored by Gilchrist with a Salute to Service Tribute. Family gathered at the Gilchrist Howard Center to honor Tyler's service to our country. The Gilchrist military veteran volunteers presented Tyler with a certificate, a We Honor Veterans Pin from the Veterans Administration, a handmade thank you for your service card from a school student, and a patriotic blanket made by a Gilchrist volunteer.



Tyler Willis with the Gilchrist Team



Tyler Willis Back in the Day

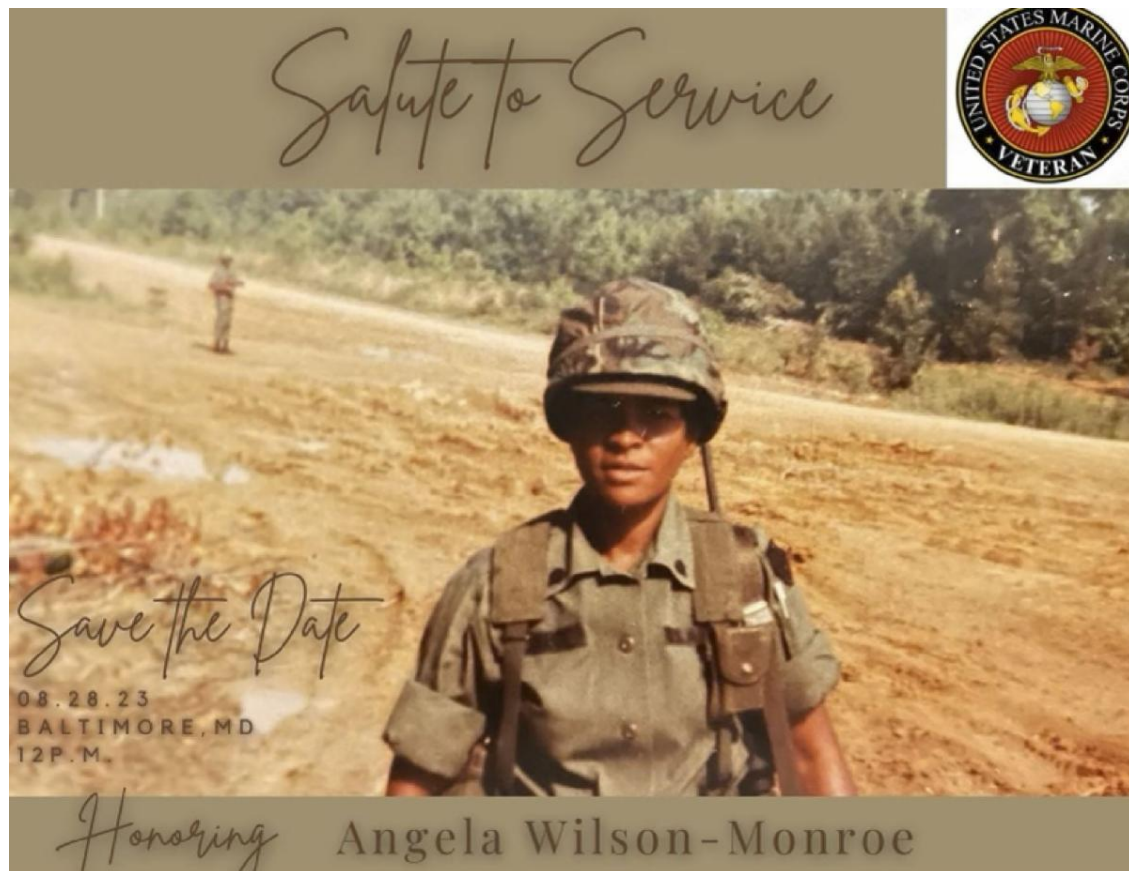
Angela Monroe - USMC & Army Veteran

Most veterans served in one branch of the military. Angela Monroe is a one of the few who served in two military branches – the United States Marine Corps and the United States Army. Angela enlisted in the Marine Corps and served two years. After leaving the Marines, she enlisted in the Army Reserves serving another 10 years.

Angela Monroe was recently honored by Gilchrist with a Salute to Service Tribute. Angela's granddaughter Kiara sent out a save-the-date card to family and friends. The card included a photo of Angela on duty in her Marine Corps uniform.

The tribute opened with a prayer, the National Anthem, and the Pledge of Allegiance. Angela was presented with a certificate from Gilchrist, a We Honor Veterans pin from the Veterans Administration, a patriotic scarf, a handmade thank-you card from a Cub Scout, and a patriotic lap blanket made by a Gilchrist volunteer. Family and friends in attendance sang patriotic songs including the Marine Corps and Army songs.

The tribute concluded with an honor salute presented by the Gilchrist military veteran volunteers in uniform. Angela Monroe returned a sharp salute that would make her Marine Corps drill instructor proud.



Marine Angela Wilson-Monroe



Angela Monroe with the Gilchrist Team

WWII Navy Veteran Edward Rysdyk

Edward Rysdyk was born August 21, 1919 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and grew up in Atlantic City, New Jersey. At age 23 Edward enlisted in the United States Navy in 1942. He was trained as a radio operator and served on ships that were based at Vanuatu in the South Pacific during the war. Edward was discharged from the Navy in 1945.

Edward married Gertrude "Tootsie" Mayerhofer in 1947. They were together for 59 years until her passing in 2006. Edward and Gertrude had two daughters: Robyn Lynn and Debra Lee.

Edward held many jobs as he started working when he was 14 years old. He worked as a bell hop, in a pastry shop, as part of WPA (Works Progress Administration), as an aide in a tuberculosis hospital, and as a draftsman. He retired from the Department of Army Materiel Command.

Edward Rysdyk was known to family and friends as a jack of all trades and a problem solver. He could repair anything. Edward knew how to construct many things and enjoyed woodworking. In his retirement community, Edward enjoyed helping neighbors with projects. He also enjoyed tennis, golf, and billiards.

The family shared this story about Edward celebrating his 100th birthday with his veteran buddies: [Maryland WWII veteran celebrates 100th birthday with fellow veterans, cake and beer | WJLA](#)

WWII Navy Veteran Edward Rysdyk was recently honored with a Salute to Service Tribute conducted by Gilchrist military veteran volunteers. Edward was presented with a We Honor Veterans pin from the Veterans Administration, a certificate from Gilchrist, a thank-you card made by a school student, and a handmade patriotic blanket made by a Gilchrist volunteer. The tribute included an honor salute presented by the uniformed veterans. Mr. Rysdyk proudly returned the salute.



Photo of Edward Rysdyk in Uniform next to his Sailor Hat



Edward Rysdyk with the Gilchrist Team



Edward Rysdyk Saluting fellow Veterans

Operation Green Light

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs looks forward to joining the National Association of Counties this year on Operation Green Light. During the week of November 6 to 12, we encourage governments, businesses, organizations, and individuals to join us by illuminating buildings and homes in green and by learning more about resources available to our service members, veterans, and families in Maryland.

More information on Operation Green Light can be found here:

[Operation Green Light 2023 \(maryland.gov\)](https://maryland.gov/operation-green-light-2023)

VETERANS RESOURCE FAIR

SAVE

THE

DATE

Saturday
October 21, 2023
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Bel Air Armory | 37 N. Main Street

Harford County
honors our

Veterans

and their families



BOB CASSILLY
HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

HARFORD COUNTY COMMISSION ON VETERAN'S AFFAIRS

vetcommission@harfordcountymd.gov | 410-638-4109 x1813 | @Harfordveterans12

Uniform Smiles

One day, the rain was pouring like crazy and a big puddle formed in front of a local pub just outside the Navy base. An old Marine Sergeant was standing near the edge of the puddle with his fishing line in a puddle. When a Navy fighter pilot saw this, he decided to approach the man and see what he was doing.

"Fishing," the old Sergeant replied.

'This poor old fool,' thought the Navy officer, so he invited the old man inside to buy him a drink.

While drinking their beers, the fighter pilot decided to ask, "How many did you end up catching today."

"You're the eighth," the old Marine answered.

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 kmcdonnell@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

kmcdonnell@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 kmcdonnell@gilchristcares.org.



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