

## We Honor Veterans Newsletter



April 2025

### Don Kyle – Vietnam Veteran with a Purple Heart and Bronze Star for Valor

Don Kyle was born on January 9, 1943, in Springfield, Pennsylvania. He attended the University of Tennessee and participated in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC). Don entered the U.S. Army as a Second Lieutenant in 1965.

Don first trained for artillery at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and was then transferred to Vietnam and assigned to the 4th Infantry Division, as an artillery officer. During an engagement with the enemy at an isolated firebase, he was seriously wounded and carried pieces of shrapnel in his body for the rest of his life. Among his many military medals, he was awarded the Purple Heart for his wounds during combat and the Bronze Star for Valor.

After discharge from the Army in 1968, he joined the University of Maryland Department of Agriculture and retired after about forty years in managerial and mediator positions. Don also taught courses in Public Relations at the University of Maryland-Baltimore County. He had an enduring impact on everyone there, not only professionally, but personally.

Don learned about the We Honor Veterans (WHV) program at Gilchrist in 2018, and was invited to join its task force. Following attendance at the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration in March 2019, he became a valuable volunteer contributing to the Salute to Service Tributes, vet-to-vet visits, veteran cafes, and other veteran community events. Don was an essential team member who attended every possible activity. His leadership, enthusiasm and dedication were well-known and contagious. Don's favorite activity was performing with his team as they saluted veterans following their admission to the Gilchrist hospice program. He was proud of his participation while wearing his officer's uniform.

Don Kyle was a beloved and valued member of the Gilchrist We Honor Veterans program. He passed away peacefully at the Howard Inpatient Unit, on February 17th, surrounded by his devoted family and friends. During his stay at the Gilchrist Center, he had time to say good-bye to everyone. A special Salute to Service event was conducted on Saturday, February 1. It was attended by his family, local neighbors, church members, Gilchrist staff, Vietnam veterans, and a virtual audience of more than forty others.

Don had a history of dedicated involvement with his church, especially as chairman of the property committee. He eagerly participated in renovation projects at the church and

was an active member. He also was deeply involved with his community activities, charities, and his many neighborhood friends. His love of animals was quite apparent, especially with his devotion to his cats, either stray or rescue.

Don Kyle was special in all of his relationships, whether family, professional, community, church, social or through Gilchrist volunteer activities. He had a way of making everyone that he knew feel like they were special to him. Don was willing to do anything for anyone. He lived up to the premise of taking care of everyone else before himself. His love of life and everyone around him was a model that all of us need to adapt. Although Don is no longer physically among us, his spirit and love of family and extensive number of friends, will be his legacy. He will remain in our hearts, and influence how we approach the rest of our lives. God bless you, Don Kyle.

Art Grau



Don Kyle on Duty



Don Kyle Proudly Wearing his  
Army Uniform



Don Kyle (left) with Ed Kaplan and Art Grau Honoring Army Veteran Eli Nash with a Salute to Service Tribute

## Army & Air Force Veteran Carson Banks

Carson Banks was born in May of 1927 in Jenkinjones, West Virginia. He was the third of 17 children in his family. Carson's siblings included Everett, Harold, Jerome, Ellsworth, Fermon, Earnest, Willa, Eugenia, Athalene, Marva, Greta, Bill, Dwight, Mary, Twyman, and Maurice.

Carson attended Gary District High School in Gary, West Virginia. He entered the Army in 1947 and was trained to be a Military Police Officer (MP). After serving in the Army, Carson transferred to the Air Force and was assigned to an Air Police Squadron. He achieved the rank of Staff Sergeant and served as an Air Police supervisor. He was then sent to Vietnam.

Carson takes pride in the fact that nine Banks brothers served honorably in the military. He likes to tell the story about his chance meeting with one of his brothers in Vietnam. Carson encountered his brother Bill at the Da Nang Air Base in early 1967. Carson, who was with the 632nd Security Police Squadron and stationed at the Binh Thuy Air Base, traveled to the Da Nang Air Base where Bill, a Marine with the Bravo Company of the 1st Military Police Battalion, happened to be stationed.



Carson Banks retired from the Air Force in 1968. After his military career, he started a HVAC business in Montgomery, New York.

Carson married June Wright, and they had four children: Linda, Gwen, Frieda, and Carson Jr. After becoming a widower, he later married Dorothy Benjamin.

Carson Banks has a passion for the outdoors and enjoys fishing. He also loves growing various types of vegetables. He was an avid racquetball player for many years and competed in the Maryland Senior Olympics. Carson eventually stopped playing when no other competitors were left in the 90+ age group. Additionally, he enjoyed traveling in his RV; one summer, he took a trip from New York to Alaska.

Carson Banks was recently honored with a salute-to-service tribute to thank him for his service to our country. Surrounded by family, the tribute began with an opening prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Carson was presented with a certificate from Gilchrist, a We Honor Veterans pin and a Vietnam Veteran pin from the Veterans Administration. Additionally, he was presented with a patriotic blanket made by a Gilchrist volunteer and a thank-you card created by a Cub Scout. Two of Carson's sisters, who were present, received patriotic scarves and proud family member pins. The tribute concluded with a closing prayer. The Gilchrist veteran volunteer then presented Carson with a formal salute, which Carson proudly returned.



Carson Banks (standing center) at the 1961 Air Defense Command Pistol Matches



Staff Sergeant Carson Banks (right) with fellow Air Force MPs



Carson Banks saluting Gilchrist volunteer and Marine Corps/Vietnam Veteran Rick Sullivan

## Army Veteran Dr. William Bruce Russell

William Bruce Russell, Sr., known to friends and family as Bruce, was born on October 24, 1928, in the town of Harmony Village in Middlesex County, Virginia. Bruce graduated as part of the Class of 1945 from George P. Phenix High School in Hampton, Virginia. He went on to study biology at Virginia Union College (now University) in Richmond, Virginia. After earning his bachelor's degree in 1949, he entered Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, D.C. He received his M.D. from Howard in 1953.

Bruce entered the Army in 1955 as a captain in the Army Medical Corps. He was stationed at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, for the majority of his service but also spent time at Fort Drum, New York. Bruce left the Army in 1957.

Dr. Russell was a practicing orthopedic surgeon for most of his career. He ran his own office, had privileges at several local hospitals, and simultaneously had consulting jobs at local offices of the Veterans' Administration and the Social Security Administration for several years. He also visited and treated patients at area penal institutions and mental hospitals for many years.

At age 66, Dr. Russell closed his practice and started working for a medical health provider company, traveling to their offices all over Maryland to see patients. Bruce continued in that position for 25 years until health concerns necessitated his retirement at age 91.

Bruce met Alice Marie Ward in 1951 at Freedmen's Hospital (now Howard University Hospital) on the campus of Howard University in Washington, D.C., where he was a medical student, and she was a student nurse. They were married on June 21, 1958.

Bruce and Alice had four children: daughter Robin Russell Allen and sons William Bruce Russell, Jr., Stephen Ward Russell, and Jefferson Alan Russell. They had two grandsons: Robert Garner Allen IV and Richard Alister Ward Allen.

William Bruce Russell, Sr., M.D. was a man of deep faith, a devoted husband for just shy of 35 years, and a loving father and grandfather. Of particular note, though, he lived for medicine. He loved every aspect of it; he was known to read medical texts and periodicals fervently, and after retiring from surgery and private practice, he worked as a staff physician with a Maryland Healthcare provider, traveling to office locations all over the state to see patients, into his 90s. In his downtime, Dr. Russell enjoyed reading (especially John Grisham novels), solving crossword puzzles, and singing tenor as part of his church choir. He felt blessed to have had the opportunity to travel to many locales in the U.S. and beyond, often to attend medical conferences and to earn Continuing Medical Education credits. He loved spending quality time with his family.

Dr. William Bruce Russell was recently honored with a salute to service tribute conducted by a team of Gilchrist military veteran volunteers. The tribute opened with a prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The family and guests sang the National Anthem with music provided by a Gilchrist music therapist. Dr. Russell 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 patriotic blanket handmade by a Gilchrist volunteer. Everyone then sang several patriotic songs, concluding with the Army song. When the veteran team offered Dr. Russell a formal salute, he proudly returned the salute. The tribute concluded with a closing prayer and the singing of God Bless America.



Dr. William Bruce Russell, Sr.





Dr. Russell with the Gilchrist Team

## Montford Point Marine Henry Price

Henry Price was born in Baltimore, Maryland on the 20th of February in 1925. After graduating from Frederick Douglass High School, Henry joined the United States Marine Corps.

Henry was part of the first group of African Americans to be trained as Marines at Montford Point in 1942. The Montford Point Marines were the first African Americans to serve in the U.S. Marine Corps, training at the segregated Montford Point Camp in Jacksonville, North Carolina, from 1942 to 1949. Over 20,000 black men underwent training there during a time of racial segregation in the military. The first recruits arrived on August 26, 1942, marking a significant moment in military history as the Marine Corps was the last branch to integrate. Their legacy is honored for breaking racial barriers and paving the way for future generations of African American service members.

After being honorably discharged from the Marines, Henry went to work for the federal government at Fort Meade in Maryland. He worked there until retirement.

Henry met and married Nellie Jackson. They had one son Orlando.

Henry Price was recently honored with a Salute to Service Tribute on his 100th birthday. The tribute was conducted by a team of Gilchrist military veteran volunteers. In addition, a number of family and friends were also in attendance.

The tribute opened with a prayer, singing of the National Anthem, and the Pledge of Allegiance. Henry was presented with a certificate from Gilchrist, a We Honor Veterans pin from the Veterans Administration, a patriotic blanket made by a Gilchrist volunteer, and a thank-you card made by a student. Henry's son Orlando (himself an Army veteran) was presented with a Proud Family Member of a Veteran pin from Gilchrist. Everyone then sang the Marine Corps Hymn. Henry was then presented a formal salute by the military veterans. Wearing his Montford Point Marine cap, Henry proudly returned the salute. The tribute concluded with a prayer.

Following the tribute, one of the Marine volunteers commented "It was such an honor to salute a Montford Marine on his 100th birthday."

Here is a video of Henry Price on his birthday being honored for his service to our country.

<https://www.wmar2news.com/voiceforveterans/montford-point-marine-veterancelebrates-100th-birthday>



Montford Point Marine Henry Price returning a salute as his son Orlando looks on

## Vet Cafés

A Vet Café is held for veterans at a healthcare or residential facility and allows them to come together to talk about their military service.

On March 18, 2025, a team of Gilchrist military veteran volunteers conducted a Vet Café at North Oaks Retirement Community. Nine resident veterans attended the café. Military branches represented by the nine veterans included the Coast Guard, Army Air Corps, Navy, Army, Air Force, and the Army Signal Corps. Several of the veterans were over 100 years old.

The veterans talked about topics such as where they were stationed, what they did in the military, favorite memories, and most disliked military food (turns out that was SOS). There was a lot of laughter as they listened to their fellow veterans.

These Vet Cafes provide veterans with opportunities to talk with and share stories with other veterans. Gilchrist plans to conduct more Vet Cafés in 2025.





North Oaks veterans with Gilchrist volunteers and Vietnam Veterans Tim Price (standing left), Mike Lachance (standing 2nd from left) and Paul Sullivan (standing far right)

## VA Health and Benefits App

The Veterans Administration recently announced the availability of their new **VA Health and Benefits App**.

With the VA Health and Benefits App, you can refill prescriptions, message your care team or check your VA benefits anytime, anywhere using your smartphone. Using this app, you can:

- Have your VA care team at your fingertips
- Kick pharmacy runs to the curb
- Check on claims and appeals status updates
- Have your appointments managed with military precision
- Carry proof of service in your pocket

With a 4.8 out of 5 rating in the Apple App Store, Veterans who use the app have voiced how hard it is to imagine their VA experience without it. You'll feel like you have a VA office in your pocket, always ready to help. Click on the following link to learn more and to download the app.

[Download the VA Health and Benefits App - VA News](#)

## 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 smart-ass fighter pilot decided to ask, "How many did you end up catching today."

"You 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](mailto: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](mailto:kmcdonnell@gilchristcares.org).

## Gilchrist Cares

You may know Gilchrist best for the care we provide people near the end of life. But we offer so much more than hospice. Today's Gilchrist extends services to individuals with serious illness who need our care and support well in advance of hospice care. We also provide counseling and support before and after the loss of a loved one. Please visit the Gilchrist website to learn more.

[Gilchrist providing care at every stage of serious illness \(gilchristcares.org\)](http://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](mailto:kmcdonnell@gilchristcares.org).



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