
We Honor Veterans Newsletter - October 2025 Edition

From Gilchrist - We Honor Veterans <wehonorveterans@gilchristcares.org>

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We Honor Veterans Newsletter

October 2025 Edition

Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans

Save the Date!

Gilchrist's 8th Annual Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration is

Sunday, March 22, 2026

Event is in-person at 11:30 a.m. at Martin's West, Baltimore, MD.

Registration opens in January 2026!

The Keynote Speaker will be Karl Arthur Marlantes, USMC:

Join us to hear Vietnam War hero Karl Marlantes, recipient of the Navy Cross, Bronze Star, and two Purple Hearts. Bestselling author of *Matterhorn* and *What It Is Like to Go to War*, he will share unforgettable stories of courage, sacrifice, and resilience.

We need your help! Please spread the word about this event. We would like to reach as many Vietnam veterans as possible.

This free event is 100% supported by community donations. If you know of someone who would like to become a sponsor or if you would like to make a donation, please visit the Gilchrist website below and then click on "Donate to the 2025 Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration," or call Kim McDonnell at 443-849-8337.

[Welcome Home Celebration for Vietnam Veterans | Gilchrist](#)

We Hope to see you there!

Vietnam Traveling Wall in Maryland

The Traveling Memorial Wall is a 3/5 scale of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC; it stands six feet tall at the center and covers almost 300 feet from end to end.

This Traveling Memorial stands as a reminder of the great sacrifices made during the Vietnam War. It was made for the purpose of helping heal and rekindle friendships and to allow people the opportunity to visit loved ones in their home town who otherwise may not be able to make the trip to Washington.

The Traveling Wall will be in New Windsor, Maryland October 9-13, 2025. Plan your visit to see this memorial and to hear nationally known speakers who served in Vietnam. There will also be a large number of veteran-related tents to visit.

Here is a public service announcement with more information about this special event.

[Vietnam PSA.mov - Google Drive](#)

For a day-by-day schedule and to see the list of speakers, go to:

[The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall – Babylon Vault Company](#)

Vet to Volunteer

Choosing to volunteer for the We Honor Veterans (WHV) Team and Task Force with Gilchrist is a decision that grew out of a deep sense of gratitude, a desire to give back, and a personal commitment to honor those who served in the military. For me, volunteering intertwines my values, upbringing, and understanding of service, transforming admiration for veterans and their families into meaningful action.

Volunteering is often rooted in personal history, and my own path began with values instilled by parents and many other caring, influential family members that surrounded me. I learned at a young age the importance of volunteering and leading others. My dad served four years in the US Army before I was born, but he rarely talked about his military experiences. After serving, he joined the steelworkers' union as a machinist at Bethlehem Steel in Sparrows Point and attended college at night. My dad did much more than that--he volunteered as my baseball coach and participated in scouting events when I was in elementary school. He was also an influential leader in the neighborhood and often carved out time to participate in pick-up sports and other activities with my friends, despite all the other responsibilities he had that consumed

much of his time. Throughout my upbringing, the thing I remember most is him saying and demonstrating that it was important to “be the locomotive and not the caboose”. He encouraged me to seek opportunities to volunteer, motivate others to join me, do great things for others, and be something bigger than myself—I’m only 5’6” so maybe that wasn’t a “tall” task.

I grew up in “Bawlmer” and attended Sparrows Point High School. During this time, I was an assistant coach for my little brother’s baseball team and my uncle’s girls’ softball team. I also served as Class President for two years, as Student Government Association President, and as the Student Representative on Baltimore County’s Board of Education. After graduating from Notre Dame, I joined the US Air Force and served for 29 years. After retiring as a Colonel in 2015, I continued to serve the military and other government organizations as a defense contractor in Germany until learning my dad had stage four cancer attributed to his work around asbestos in the steel mills. I guess you could say my dad’s words and actions rubbed off a bit on me throughout my life.

Within a few months, I found myself back at my dad’s home helping to care for him for 15 months until he passed away. As his body started to fail and he needed more assistance than I could provide, we learned about Gilchrist and the amazing services and support they offered as people near the end of life’s journey. My dad loved to sing, and Gilchrist provided in-home music therapy, something I was also able to participate in as a musician and singer.

The most memorable event during this journey occurred about four months before his death. I was contacted by Rick Sullivan who served as a Marine in the Vietnam War. He told me Gilchrist had a team of veterans who volunteered to perform tributes for fellow veterans and their families. I spoke to my dad about this, and he was excited and honored that Gilchrist offered to honor him for his service to our nation. About a week later, a team of Gilchrist veteran volunteers paid tribute to my dad in a ceremony that lasted about 30 minutes, complete with his Gilchrist music therapist and about 50 family and friends in his backyard. It is one of the most moving events I have ever been a part of, and it lit a fire within me to want to get involved once again as a volunteer and join this amazing team. I told Rick after the ceremony that my uniform was in Alabama and as soon as I could get there to bring it back (and lose “a few” pounds so that I could get back into it), I would be honored to join the Gilchrist WHV team. Shortly before my dad passed, I was able to get back to Alabama to retrieve my uniform, and a few months later, I contacted Gilchrist and asked for details on what I needed to do to join the We Honor Veterans team. The rest is history...

I’ve been associated with Gilchrist as a volunteer for almost two years and it has been a privilege and incredibly rewarding experience to give back what the WHV team provided for my dad’s family and friends. The WHV team leaders in and around the Baltimore area have also invited me on occasion (when they can’t get the music therapy A-team) to perform patriotic music during the tributes. Even though I continue to work full-time, I like my dad did, carve out time and use my earned time off to volunteer for the WHV tributes, to participate on the Task Force, and to support Gilchrist’s annual event to honor and support our Vietnam veterans.

My decision to volunteer for the WHV team is built upon a foundation of gratitude, empathy, and a desire to serve. It reflects my personal history and values, an opportunity to give back, and a chance to be part of something larger than myself.

Through this journey, I have learned that true honor is found not only in ceremony, but in the daily acts of kindness, recognition, and care. I am humbled by the privilege of serving those who have served, and I am committed to carrying their legacy forward—one story, one handshake, one act of compassion at a time.

Colonel Al Hunt, USAF (Ret.)



Gilchrist team honoring Al Hunt Sr.



Col Al Hunt (left) with the Gilchrist team honoring veteran Andrew LaMarche

Marine Timothy Casey

Timothy Francis Casey was born in January of 1947 in Baltimore, Maryland. He attended the Shrine of the Little Flower for grade school where he learned to play a soprano bugle by ear and played on their drum and bugle corps. Tim graduated from Calvert Hall College High School in 1965 and attended the University of Baltimore where he would eventually receive a Bachelor of Science Degree in accounting. In 1962, Tim was invited to join the Yankee Rebels Drum and Bugle Corps in Baltimore.

Tim entered the United States Marine Corps in September of 1967. Based on his proficiency playing the bugle, Tim was assigned to the United States Marine Drum & Bugle Corps. Their mission is to provide music and drill ceremony to the Commandant of the Marine Corps and the Commanding Officer of Marine Barracks Washington, D.C. Founded in 1934, "The Commandant's Own" is the only active-duty drum and bugle corps currently serving in our armed forces. Tim was honorably discharged in February of 1971.

After leaving the military, Tim taught the horn line for the Hamilton White Knights junior corps. He then returned to the Yankee Rebels Drum and Bugle Corps.

Tim Casey enjoyed a long and storied career on the Maryland drum corps scene, as a top-notch instructor, performer, and administrator. In recognition of his dedication to his field, Tim was inducted into the Maryland Drum and Bugle Corps Hall of Fame.

Tim was employed as an accountant throughout his career working for several companies including Mars Supermarkets and for over 25 years for Cloverland/Royal Farms. He retired in 2011.

Tim has two children: Amy and Sean. He also has two stepchildren Janet and Steven and seven grandchildren. Tim was married to Roberta Kuhfuss (Bobbie) in April of 1995.

In addition to music and drum and bugle corps activities, Tim always enjoyed reading, word games and puzzles, bowling and traveling. He never tired of taking a trip to the ocean for rest and relaxation.

Timothy Casey was recently honored with a Salute to Service Tribute conducted by a team of Gilchrist military veteran volunteers. The purpose of the tribute was to thank Tim for his service to our country. The tribute opened with a prayer, the singing of the National Anthem, and the Pledge of Allegiance. Surrounded by family and friends, Tim 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 school student. Tim's wife Bobbie was presented with a Proud Wife of a Veteran pin and a patriotic scarf. Everyone sang some patriotic music and the Marine Hymn. The tribute concluded with an honor salute and a closing prayer. Tim returned a sharp salute that would make his Parris Island Drill Instructor proud.



Tim Casey's Boot Camp Photo



Tim Casey in his United States
Marine Drum & Bugle Corps
Uniform



Tim Casey (seated) with his son Sean (served in the Marine Corps and is a Baltimore County Police Officer) with the Gilchrist Team.
Note the bugle in Tim's lap.

Army Veteran Edward Cody

Edward James Cody Sr. was born on June 23, 1935, in Philadelphia, PA one of fourteen children born to Wayman F. Cody and Marie Burns Cody. "Eddie" as he was affectionately called received his education in the public schools of Philadelphia graduating from Benjamin Franklin High School in 1953 as president of his senior class. He attended Cheyney University of Pennsylvania for two years and then become employed by the United States Postal Service.

Edward was drafted into the United States Army in 1957, serving two years and then transferred to the Army Reserve until honorably discharged in June 1963. He returned to the postal service and retired in 1995.

Edward attended Allen AME Church and later attended Corinthian Baptist Church of Germantown. He loved his church and all the people who worshipped there. He accepted Christ at an early age and in his later years became a twenty-four seven warrior for Christ. He faithfully attended the City Wide Interdenominational Christian Training Institute located in the Mount Tabor AME Church, where he proudly graduated an A student as an evangelist.

Edward was a 32nd degree mason of the Masonic Fraternity and a member of the Herbert E. Miller Lodge #151.

Edward had two loving children: son Edward James Cody Jr. and daughter Karen Essie Woodland. Edward was blessed with seven grandchildren and eleven great grandchildren.

Edward James Cody Sr. was recently honored with a Salute to Service Tribute conducted by a team of Gilchrist volunteers. Edward was surrounded by a large number of family and friends. The tribute opened with a prayer, the singing of the National Anthem, and the Pledge of Allegiance. Edward was presented with a certificate from Gilchrist, a We Honor Veterans pin from the Veterans Administration, a thank-you card from a school student, and a patriotic blanket made by a Gilchrist volunteer. Everyone joined in the singing of several patriotic songs, including the Army song. The military veteran volunteers presented Edward with an honor salute to recognize his military service. The tribute concluded with a prayer.



Edward James Cody Sr. in Uniform



Edward James Cody Sr. with the Gilchrist Team

Navy Veteran George Waicker

George "Chic" Waicker was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1948. He graduated from Archbishop Curley High School in 1966 and then attended the University of Virginia, graduating in 1970.

Chic entered the United States Navy in 1970 as a Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG) working in educational services related to gunnery and ordnance. Chic served on the USS Intrepid.

The USS Intrepid (CV-11), also known as The Fighting "I", is one of 24 Essex-class aircraft carriers built during World War II for the United States Navy. She was commissioned in August of 1943 and is the fourth US Navy ship to bear the name. Chic was discharged from the Navy in 1974 and then spent his career working at the National Security Agency.

Chic married Maryann Sufczynski.

Chic loved model ships, the Orioles and Ravens, and listening to music from the 1960s and 1970s.

George "Chic" Waicker was recently honored with a salute to service tribute conducted by a team of Gilchrist staff and volunteers. The tribute included an opening prayer, the singing of the National Anthem, and the Pledge of Allegiance. Chic was presented with a 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 a student. The Gilchrist music therapist played patriotic music, including the US Navy Anthem. The veterans then presented Chic with an honor salute to thank him for his service to our country. The tribute concluded with a prayer and the singing of God Bless America.



LTJG George Waicker



George "Chic" Waicker with the Gilchrist Team

WWII Army Veteran Andy Bonthron

Andy Bonthron was born in September of 1922 on 22nd Street in Baltimore, Maryland. Andy graduated from Baltimore Polytechnic in 1940.

Andy entered the Army in 1942. He spent time in Manila in the Philippines as well as Japan. He worked in communications, laying phone lines before the troops arrived. Andy was discharged from the military in 1946.

Andy met Joan Renehan in the summer of 1954. They married in October of 1955 at St. Phillip and James Catholic Church in Baltimore. Andy and Joan have two children: Drew and Carol.

Andy worked for 36 years for the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company (C&P) in security. He retired at 55 years of age, and took a fun job with the Baltimore Orioles at Memorial Stadium until they won the World Series in 1983.

Andy is a past grand knight with the Notre Dame Council of the Knights of Columbus. He was an active member of the Holy Name at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. Andy and Joan volunteered in many aspects of church life. They continued their active volunteerism at Oak Crest community where they have lived for 29 years. Andy loves the Orioles, his country, wife Joan and his family. He is especially proud of his granddaughter, Dr. Ami, a pediatric resident at Georgetown, and great-grand daughter Clare, who attends University of Maryland College Park.

Andy Bonthron was recently honored with a salute-to-service tribute conducted by a team of Gilchrist veteran volunteers. One of the Gilchrist music therapists attended to provide music. Andy was surrounded by family and friends.

The tribute began with an opening prayer, the singing of the National Anthem, and the Pledge of Allegiance. Andy was presented with a We Honor Veterans pin from the Veterans Administration. He was also given a certificate from Gilchrist honoring his military service. Andy was given a thank-you card made by a student as well as a handmade patriotic blanket. His children (Drew and Carol) were given Proud Family Member of a Veteran pins. The music therapist played several patriotic songs, concluding with the Army song. The military veterans then presented Andy with an honor salute to thank him for his service. The tribute concluded with a prayer and the singing of God Bless America.



Andy Bonthron in uniform



Andy Bonthron with his rifle



Andy Bonthron with the Gilchrist Team

Veteran Buddy Link Helps Veterans

Together We Served (TWS), a military and Veteran online community website with 2.5 million members, has launched a new free service called '[Veteran Buddy Link](#)' to assist

Veterans who, due to their location or circumstances, may find themselves in a state of loneliness and would welcome the friendship and support of other Veterans, particularly those residing in their neighborhood.

Veterans are justifiably proud of their service and often this portrayal of pride may mask possible underlying anxieties and other issues associated with loneliness. Those who have served share a unique bond that remains with them throughout their lives. Veterans are naturally drawn to and thrive in the company of other Veterans because the unique culture of military service and the commitment to service and sacrifice is common to all.

This is the reason TWS's Veteran Buddy Link service was specially designed to enable all Veterans, especially those who may feel isolated or alone, to seek the camaraderie of other Veterans in the comfort and security of TWS's online environment which has often been acknowledged as reminiscent of a military base.

To seek a Buddy connection, all a Veteran need do is first register at the TWS Veteran Buddy Link portal page. Just click on the link in the first paragraph above.

Uniform Smiles

"Halt!" shouted our Marine Corps drill instructor. He had noticed that, for the umpteenth time, a recruit kept going to his right on a left command. Our drill instructor approached the directionally challenged Marine and stomped on his left foot. "Now," he said, "when I say 'left,' it's the one that hurts."

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.

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 \(gilchristcares.org\)](https://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.

The logo for Gilchrist, featuring the word "gilchrist" in a green, lowercase, sans-serif font. A single green leaf is positioned above the letter "i".

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