**JAMES R. GILCHRIST**

Brick Location: B7

A Columbus native, he was one of 10 siblings. His father worked on the railroad to support the family. He was raised in a spiritual family that remained close throughout their lifetimes. He is the last living sibling and is currently residing in a skilled nursing facility.

He entered into the U.S. Navy in January 1945. While enlisted he was a member of the Seabees #1800 Special Battalion who participated in WWII stationed in Guam. He received an honorable discharge in 1953 after serving eight years. Still wanting to serve his country, he then entered the U.S. Air Force in October 953. He served tours of duty in the Korean War stationed at KunSan, and the War in Vietnam where he served two tours of duty. He also served on the USS General Patrick ship. His job was listed as a Load Master. During his tours of duty in Vietnam he was exposed to Agent Orange. He and 90 other soldiers spent 90 days in a hospital there to have their blood tested for side effects of this chemical. Later on in years, it was discovered there were several medical side-effects to the military personnel who were exposed to this chemical. James is one of those victims. He has been diagnosed by Veterans Administration medical personnel as one of those with Agent Orange symptoms. He still has his mental aptitude, but his physical condition has degraded immensely.

He retired from the USAF as a Master Sergeant at Norton AFB, California in June 1974. He served his country patriotically and honorably for many years.

While overseas he met the love of his life, Pilar, in San Pablo, Spain and spent many years of wedded bliss together. Unfortunately, Pilar passed away in 2003. He has one son and three grandchildren. His family is forever thankful of his contribution, along with other brave military men and women who made several sacrifices for the citizens of The United States of America to protect our freedom.

Submitted by:

Jo Alexander

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