



## **William “Bill” Gray** **Served in Vietnam, 1968 to 1969**

William Gray was drafted in 1966 and then enlisted in the Army for photography. While in basic training he applied to Officer Candidate School (OCS). He was accepted and went to Infantry OCS at Fort Benning, Georgia. Prior to his Vietnam service, Gray was a Platoon Leader in the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He was promoted to First Lieutenant in the 4th Infantry Division in the Pleiku area of Vietnam’s Central Highlands. He was awarded the Silver Star and the Purple Heart for service in Vietnam. Following his combat tour, he was assigned to the 6th Cavalry Regiment at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, and then to the S-4 supply office for the installation.

In 2009, Gray was appointed by former County Executive Leggett to be the first Chair of the newly formed Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs. He served as Chair until 2013 and continues to be an active participant. Gray joined Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter 641 of Silver Spring in 2005 and served as VVA Chapter Secretary from 2009 to 2013, and has since assisted the chapter in its numerous endeavors including supporting its reputation as “The Wall Washing Crew” at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in DC. The chapter washes the Memorial the first Saturday of each month from April through October at 6:30 a.m. To underscore the group’s seriousness of purpose, Chapter 641 Sergeant-at-Arms Rodney Eng developed opening and closing ceremonies. The ceremonies are short and simple - the morning begins with a salute at the flagpole and the Three Servicemen statue, and ends with coming to attention, a salute, and a moment of silence. Before leaving, the Wall washers face out and salute. Then they turn and face in toward the gleaming granite incised with names. Together, they salute.

Gray holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from the University of Maryland at College Park. He worked as a long term substitute teacher in Anne Arundel and Howard Counties. In addition, he served as an instructional assistant at Noyes Children’s Center, a Maryland-operated detention center for adolescents, in Rockville. He has had a varied career that has included employment with the United States Postal Service, a real estate firm, and in customer sales and service. For over 30 years, Gray operated his own business as a home improvement contractor. Gray is an avid photographer and, over the years, has sold his photographs at arts and crafts shows in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia. He has also had work on display in galleries in Annapolis and Baltimore.

Gray currently resides in Silver Spring, Maryland, with his wife Donna.