



Hayward Gilliam

November 8, 1932 - August 3, 2025

Hayward Gilliam November 8, 1932-August 3, 2025

Hayward Gilliam, 92, passed away on August 3, 2025. He was preceded in death by his parents and siblings as well as a son, William Ray Gilliam; grandson, David Rheame; and son-in-law, Dennis Chisholm.

Mr. Gilliam grew up in Big Stone Gap, Virginia as the youngest of his siblings. He left to serve in the United States Army during the Korean War where among many honors, he earned a Purple Heart and the Silver Star for valor in combat during the Hadong Ambush. After his honorable discharge from the Army, Mr. Gilliam relocated to Michigan where he worked for Chrysler until he retired and returned to Big Stone Gap. He was a member of the Irondale Faith Baptist Church for more than 30 years. Throughout his retirement, Mr. Gilliam honored his fellow veterans by participating in thousands of military funerals with local Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, and Korean War Veterans organizations. In 2018, Mr. Gilliam was recognized by the Virginia VFW State Commander for his service in over 3500 military funerals.

Mr. Gilliam is survived by his sons Hayward Gilliam, Jr. (Sheryl) and Frederick Gilliam (Jeanette) and his daughters Sheila Rheame (Joseph), Tammy Chisholm (Dennis), Sarah Gilliam, and Charlene Gilliam. Additionally, he is survived by his children's siblings: Connie Guntle (Johnny), Bonnie Byington

(John), and Peter Rayl (Mary). Mr. Gilliam also leaves behind his grandchildren: Andy Rheume (Candice), Melissa Rotary (Nick), Jayme Gilliam, Cody Chisholm, Bradley Gilliam (Abby), Nora Gilliam, Randi Morningstar (Dan), Jarred Gilliam (Candace), Taylor Gilliam (Taylor), Jonathon Guntle (Vicki), and Nolan Burrill. His great-grandchildren are Joslyn Rheume, Gus Rheume, Conner Gilliam, Ellie Rotary, Nick Rotary, Louis Maroun, and Hayes Gilliam. Lastly, Mr. Gilliam is survived by his beloved dog, Rex, and his dear friends and fellow veterans, Carl Wade and Jimmy Harding.

The Gilliam family would like to thank everyone who looked out for and cared for Mr. Gilliam in his final years, especially his friends and neighbors on Poplar Hill, Dr. Souhail Shamiyeh and the staff of the Norton Veterans' Clinic, Ruby Sanders of the local Department of Veterans' Services, Earline Lewis and the staff of Intrepid Home Health, Nancy Miller and the staff of Holston Rehabilitation, the staff of Gentiva Hospice, and Chrissie Hall, his personal caregiver.

The family will receive visitors from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Holding Funeral Home in Big Stone Gap on Thursday, August 7, 2025. A Funeral service will immediately follow at 7:00 p.m. in the chapel with Pastor Tom McNeil presiding. Mr. Gilliam will be laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery. Holdings will coordinate this final resting place, and update at a later time.

An honor guard service will be held on Friday at 11:00 a.m. at Holding Funeral Home (17 E. 3rd St. N. Big Stone Gap) the local D.A.V. and V.F.W. with whom he served many years will conduct the local military honors.

Anyone who knew Mr. Gilliam is well aware that he liked to pinch his pennies. He explicitly stated that he did not want flowers at his funeral because they're a waste of money. We'll gladly put them out if you send them, but if you hear a lawn mower in the middle of the night, that's on you. In lieu of flowers, the

family asks that those who wish to honor Mr. Gilliam's life and military service make a donation to the Big Stone Gap chapters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, (4530 Willson Rd, Big Stone Gap, VA 24219.)

An online registry is available for the family at www.holdingfuneralhome.com

Holding Funeral Home in charge of the arrangements.

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 7. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Holding Funeral Home, Inc.

17 E. 3rd St., N.

P. O. Drawer H

Big Stone Gap, VA 24219

1-276-523-1470

holdingfuneralhome@comcast.net

<http://www.holdingfuneralhome.com>

Tribute Wall

LI

“ He was faithful to the veterans!💜

Linda - August 21, 2025 at 09:08 AM

RS

“ Hayward, you were one in a million and you are missed!! Sarah and siblings I am so sorry for your loss. You are in my thoughts and prayers



Ruby Sanders - August 11, 2025 at 04:10 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Hayward Gilliam.

August 07, 2025 at 09:55 AM

AS

“ Mr. Gilliam was our neighbor, and one of the hardest workers I've ever seen. He was always working outside. One of my favorite memories of him is how excited he got when our daughter was learning to ride her bike in front of his house. He cheered her on when we let go and she didn't fall. May the family find comfort and peace in cherished memories.

Amy Clark Spain - August 06, 2025 at 01:24 PM



“ *Dana DeFoor lit a candle in memory of Hayward Gilliam*



Dana DeFoor - August 05, 2025 at 12:51 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Hayward Gilliam.*



August 05, 2025 at 10:54 AM