



## James Wilson Kerr III

March 18, 2008

James Wilson Kerr, III, 87, of Easton MD, died on March 18, 2008 from complications of strokes. At the time of his death, he resided at the Charlotte Hall (MD) Veterans Home. Mr. Kerr was a retired Army Lt. Col. and nuclear physicist.

Mr. Kerr was born to James Wilson Kerr and Laura Virginia Wright of Baltimore. Following the death of his father in 1923, he, his mother, and stepfather, the Rev. Dr. Bruce A. Cumming, went to a Presbyterian mission in Mok Po, Korea. Mr. Kerr was educated in Baltimore, FL, and at the Pyongyang Foreign School (grad. 1938). Following a trip around the world, he entered Davidson College (NC; grad. with honors in chemistry 1942). He entered the US Army as a newly commissioned officer in 1942, serving with the 159th Infantry in the Aleutians during World War II. Following the war, the Army sent him to NYU for graduate work in nuclear physics (M.S., Nuclear Physics 1948). In the Korean Conflict, he served with the 8th Army in Korea (during which his Korean language skills were much in demand), and in combat with the 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment ("The Cottonbalers"). Following the Korean Conflict, Mr. Kerr was posted to NM where nuclear weapons and electronics research and development activities were based. He later served as special weapons liaison to the French 1st Army Corps in Freiburg, Germany. Returning to the US, he served at Fortress Monroe and in the Pentagon, retiring in 1964 after a 22-year career in the Army. Mr. Kerr

received 3 Bronze Stars, 2 Purple Hearts, and many other decorations, medals, badges, and honors from the US and ROK Armies.

Mr. Kerr served in the newly formed Civil Defense Agency (FEMA's predecessor), retiring from FEMA in 1985 as Sr. Policy Advisor, Natl. Preparedness Directorate. During his tenure, he oversaw technical and social research on natural and manmade disasters such as nuclear winter, fire, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, and haz-mat incidents.

He worked extensively in fire research and administration, both in his FEMA capacity and in retirement. He served as Chair and Member of the Fairfax Co. VA Fire Commission, consultant to the Chief of the Orange Co. FL Fire Dept., and on numerous fire, haz-mat, and disaster management committees of the Natl. Fire Prevention Assoc., Natl. Research Council, and other organizations. In 1995, he served as a member of a People to People delegation to South Africa, meeting with Nelson Mandela and his staff regarding the development of a national standards institute.

He published widely on military, scientific and philatelic topics. He was an international authority on Asian, Greenland, Channel Islands, and Pitcairn Island stamps; in retirement he worked for the philatelic firm of Michael Rogers Inc. (Winter Park FL). He was an accomplished singer and actor, performing in theatrical and operatic productions in Washington DC, Orlando, Troy AL, and Easton. He enjoyed hiking and climbing. Memberships: Explorers Club; American Philatelic Assoc.; American Numismatic Assoc.; St. Andrews Society of the Eastern Shore; Sons of the American Revolution; Sharon Lodge No. 182; and numerous military and scientific organizations.

In retirement, Mr. Kerr fulfilled a long desired goal, receiving his Ph.D. in Public Admin. from Warren National Univ. (formerly Kennedy-Western).

He is survived by his wife, Janice Bain-Kerr, of Easton; two children: April Kerr-Miller of Bel Air MD and Andrew A. Kerr Sr. (Katherine) of Tucson AZ; five grandchildren: Allison Almason (Steve), Diana K. Kerr, James Wilson Kerr V (Jennifer), Andrew A. Kerr Jr., Graham Kerr and his step-son Alexander M. Bain of Norman OK; two great-grandchildren: Joseph Mitchell Almason and James W. Kerr VI. He is also survived by his sister, L. Virginia Tester of Jacksonville Beach FL. He was preceded in death by his parents, stepfather, a sister, Mary Bruce Jakway, his former wives Mary Thomas Montgomery Kerr and June Lehman, daughter "Katie" Kerr Wood, his son, James Wilson Kerr IV, and grandson, Montgomery Kerr Miller.

Interment was in Loudon Park Cemetery, Baltimore. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Univ. of Delaware Disaster Research Ctr., 166 Graham Hall, Newark DE 19716 or the Davidson College Library, Davidson NC. Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home, P.A., Easton is in charge of arrangements.

# Tribute Wall



“ *James Wilson Kerr III*

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *James Wilson Kerr III*

January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ *James Wilson Kerr III*

January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM