

## We Honor Veterans Newsletter



### October 2020 Edition

#### Navy WWII Veteran Philip Marcus

Philip Marcus remembers hearing about the attack on Pearl Harbor and knowing that he had to enlist immediately, and did so by joining the Navy. Signalman First Class Petty Officer Philip Marcus served 3 1/2 years in the Navy, including two years in the southwest Pacific during WWII. His ship, along with others, invaded 13 islands, recapturing them from Japanese control.

Philip served on LST (Landing Ship Tank) #452. As a signalman, he was responsible for visible communications using flags and lights. Philip talks about the role LST 452 played in the Battle of Leyte Gulf. The Battle of Leyte Gulf was the biggest naval battle in modern history and happened in the seas near the Philippines island of Leyte.

Philip sadly remembers a terrible day when the LST grounded, presumably on the beach. Sadly, the ship had hit a reef and when the soldiers ran out of the ship, many sank and drowned due to the weight of their packs and weapons.

When asked about his fondest memory, Philip smiles and says “My shipmates – we were the best of friends who would do anything for each other.”

In 2017, Philip was honored as a Hometown Hero by the Baltimore Ravens. Philip and wife of 73 years Judith, proudly show the photo book assembled by their grandchildren showing Philip and Judith on the field at the stadium. You can watch a brief video about Philip at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7KRjC9gW2y4>



In this photo, 99-year old Philip is visiting with volunteer and Vietnam Veteran Mike Lachance as part of Gilchrist's Vet-to-Vet program.



## Marine Henry Smith Gives Lifetime to Charity

Marine Henry Smith started working with the Toys for Tots Program in 1947. The basic mission of the Marine Toys for Tots Program is to collect new unwrapped toys and distribute those toys to less fortunate children at Christmas. Henry served with the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division in Korea. After the war, Henry was stationed in Philadelphia and honorably discharged after serving 6 years in the Marine Corps.

In those early years, Henry would repair and paint sleds, bikes, wagons and other toys. He continued to work for the Toys for Tots Program until age 90, dedicating himself to this charity for 72 years.

Henry was recently honored with a Salute to Service Tribute (SST). The SST included family members and 5 Gilchrist military veteran volunteers (all Vietnam Veterans). Henry was presented with a We Honor Veterans Certificate and pin, a handmade patriotic lap blanket, and a card made by a local elementary school student. The SST concluded with a formal salute.



Henry Smith being honored by a team of Gilchrist military veteran volunteers

## Gunzelman Birthday Salute

Joseph "Joe" Gunzelman graduated from Baltimore Polytechnic Institute and enlisted in the Army in 1943. After completing basic training at Camp Adair in Oregon, his unit shipped out for the South Pacific. Joe was part of the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 161<sup>st</sup> Regiment when they invaded Luzon in the Philippines.

On Luzon, the 25<sup>th</sup> Division endured a record 165 consecutive days of combat. Joe was eventually hospitalized with malaria and jungle rot which caused his weight to drop to 97 pounds.

Following their last major battle, the 25<sup>th</sup> Division was scheduled to be part of the planned invasion of Japan. The dropping of the atomic bomb canceled the invasion. Joe left the

South Pacific in January of 1946 on the *USS General H. W. Butner* and arrived in San Francisco on February 7, 1946. Joseph Gunzelman was separated from the service on February 16, 1946.

During his time in the Army, Joe received the Bronze Star Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge 1st Award, Philippine Liberation Ribbon with 1 Bronze Star, Honorable Service Lapel Button WWII, and Expert Badge with Rifle Bar.

Joe married Rita Francis Pohl on Thanksgiving Day 1947. Joe and Rita have been married for more than 72 years.

Joseph Gunzelman was recently honored by Gilchrist with a Salute to Service Tribute (SST) as part of his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. With Joe and Rita both in a healthcare facility at Oak Crest, they were unable to be together for the SST. In addition, because of the pandemic, their four sons Stephen, Gregory, Mark and Eric were unable to attend.

Gilchrist and Oak Crest staff and volunteers planned and conducted the SST using Zoom with Oak Crest staff in the rooms with tablets so that Joe and Rita could see each other as well as those conducting the tribute. During the SST, Joe received a certificate, We Honor Veterans pin, a handmade lap blanket, and a thank-you card from an elementary student. Rita received a "Proud Wife of a Veteran" pin and a patriotic scarf.

As part of the tribute, the sons presented birthday greetings and special gifts to their parents. There was a Gilchrist music therapist on the team, so everyone sang happy birthday as well as several patriotic songs.

At the conclusion of the tribute, four Vietnam Veteran volunteers in uniform presented a formal salute to Mr. Gunzelman. Joe, wearing his Army cap and decorated jacket, sharply returned the salute. Happy Birthday Joseph Gunzelman – a proud Army veteran.



Joseph Gunzelman returning a salute



Joseph Gunzelman looking sharp in his uniform

## Grossman Salute Ceremony

Norman Grossman enlisted in the Army in 1945. Following basic training, Norman was assigned to work in the motor pool. Mr. Grossman served in the final months of World War

II in Italy and France achieving the rank of Corporal by the time he was discharged in 1947.

Upon his return home, Norman completed his studies and spent a career as a Baltimore City private and public high school biology teacher.

Norman Grossman was honored earlier this year by Gilchrist with a Salute to Service Tribute (SST). Referred by Gilchrist Social Worker Lauran Calin, Gilchrist Volunteer Veterans Don Kyle, Jim Sandoz, and Ed Kaplan conducted a Salute to Service for this United States Army WWII Veteran. The tribute was held on an outdoor courtyard terrace for the 93-year old Pikesville resident.



Norman Grossman's Basic Training Photo



Norman Grossman being honored with a military salute ceremony



Norman's Original Eisenhower Jacket



Salute to Service Tribute held outside

## Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans

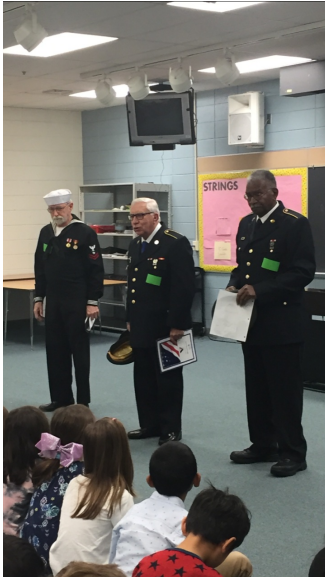
Our next Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration is scheduled for **March** of **2021**. This will be a day to honor and thank the men and women in our community who served during the Vietnam War. This Welcome Home celebration honors the veterans in our care as well as all of the veterans and their loved ones in our community.

At this time, we are planning to stream the event online. Our hope is that we can have some of our veterans in attendance with most people watching the event online.

We will let everyone know our final plans as soon as they become available.



## Operation Gratitude



Gilchrist veteran volunteers visit local elementary, middle and high school students to share their stories about service to our country. In return, the children make cards of gratitude that we give to veterans during our tributes and at our events on Veterans Day and on our Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day.

Operation gratitude is our way of engaging younger generations to honor and pay tribute to our veterans.

Here you see three veteran volunteers in uniform speaking to a group of students.

## DAV and Agent Orange

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) is urging the administration to move forward with presumptive diseases linked to Agent Orange. Since the Agent Orange act of 1991, the Department of Veterans Affairs has established a presumption of service connection for 14 diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure.

“Vietnam veterans have been coping with substantial health concerns that can be attributed to Agent Orange exposure for decades,” said DAV Deputy National Legislative Director for Benefits Shane Liermann. “Thousands have died and many have been left to endure disease that has been scientifically linked to the herbicide, and the VA’s continued delays are causing additional suffering for Vietnam veterans and their families.” You can follow along with updates to this and other legislation affecting veterans and their families by joining DAV CAN at <https://dav.quorum.us/>.

## VA and Suicide Prevention

The President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide (PREVENTS) will focus on a holistic public health approach to suicide prevention. PREVENTS seeks to change the culture surrounding mental health and suicide prevention through enhanced community integration, prioritized research activities, and implementation strategies that emphasize improved overall health and well-being.

The goal of PREVENTS is to prevent suicide — among not just Veterans but all Americans. By adopting a holistic public health approach, PREVENTS is acting on the knowledge that suicide prevention is everyone’s business, and that by working together, locally and nationally, we can prevent suicide.

For more information, go to: <https://www.va.gov/prevents/>

## DVA and the Pandemic

For many Americans, the nationwide response to the coronavirus pandemic has been unlike anything in recent memory. From social distancing and isolation to significant economic downturn, our nation’s 4.7 million disabled veterans have not been spared from COVID-19’s adverse effects.

Unemployment relief grants – Disabled American Veterans (DAV) established a COVID-19 unemployment relief fund to provide financial aid to service-connected disabled veterans who lost employment or income in the wake of the virus's outbreak.

Virtual job fairs – to help limit the spread of COVID-19, DAV and RecruitMilitary (<https://recruitmilitary.com/>) converted all scheduled in person career fairs to virtual events through the end of the year. Offering virtual events to job seekers and employers during this unprecedented time is critical to ensuring that there is no lapse in the availability of career resources, opportunities and support for veterans and their spouses.

The new virtual career fair schedule can be found at:

<https://www.dav.org/veterans/employment-resources/job-search-events/>

## Uniform Smiles

A drill sergeant grumbles at his fresh young trainee, "I didn't see you at camouflage training this morning, Private."

"Thank you very much, Sir," replies the soldier.

## 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 [wehonorveterans@gilchristcares.org](mailto:wehonorveterans@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 [wehonorveterans@gilchristcares.org](mailto:wehonorveterans@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 [wehonorveterans@gilchristcares.org](mailto:wehonorveterans@gilchristcares.org).

