

We Honor Veterans Newsletter



July 2021 Edition

Charles Gillet - Oldest Navy Seal

Charles Gillet always said he was “born to be in the water.” A champion swimmer at Yale, Charles was the number three back stroker in the country and wanted to swim in the Olympics. Unfortunately, the Olympics were cancelled in 1940 and 1944.

While at Yale, Charles entered the United States Navy Reserve Midshipmen's School. This school was instituted in June, 1940 with the goal of training 36,000 Naval Reserve officers for commands in the vastly-expanding U.S. Navy fleet being built up in preparation for the United States' entry into World War II.

Upon completion of Midshipmen's School, Charles Gillet headed to Coronado, CA, to train for service in the United States Navy. While in Coronado, Charles volunteered for the new Frogman training program.

From Coronado, he was shipped to the South Pacific, where he served with distinction in the island campaigns toward the Japanese homeland. Charles remembers being dropped off in the water from a fast-moving speedboat with the goal of mapping the ocean floor leading up to land. His team would look for obstacles such as reefs, fabricated barriers, mines, etc. Once they returned to their ship, they would draw these obstacles on maps in preparation for troops landing on the beaches. Charles and his fellow frogmen helped prepare for the battles at Peleliu and Okinawa. Charles liked to talk about how they were paid a \$50/month bonus for handling explosives.

Charles and his team were on a Landing Craft Infantry (LCI). Charles would smile when he told the story of how they had run a cable from stem to stern to be able to hang their laundry out to dry. One day, a Kamikaze plane dove at their LCI, but before hitting the ship, a wing clipped the “clothesline” ripping off the wing and sending the plane into the water.

There is a great picture of Charles taken by a Navy photographer. The Navy sent the young reporter out to do a promotional story about these new frogmen. Charles suggested taking a photo of him looking out to sea. Charles did not see the photo for several years, but many in American saw his photo on the cover of a magazine. According to Charles, my mother threw a “conniption fit.”

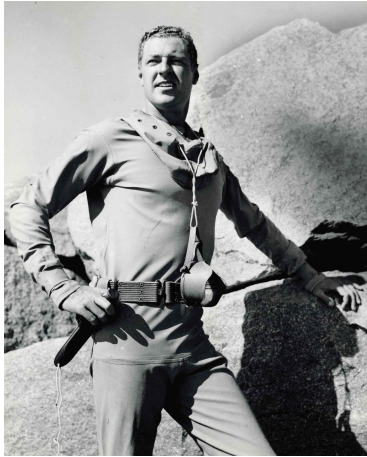
Charles Gillet was in the active reserves for 18 years, serving during WWII and the Korean War. A Navy ‘Frogman,’ Gillet served as one of the forerunners to the present-day United States Navy SEALs, performing reconnaissance missions throughout the Pacific

campaign. He would return to duty in the Korean War, setting the stage for generations of SEALs to come.

Charles Gillet was honored by Gilchrist with a Salute to Service Tribute in March of this year. Sadly, Charles passed away the day after the tribute. One of the Gilchrist veterans conducting the tribute commented, "It was an honor to salute a true hero."

Charles was interviewed by a representative of the American Veterans Center. You can watch the full interview online (link below). You can tell from the interview that Charles Gillet was very proud of his military service.

[Oldest Living Navy SEAL Charles Gillet \(Full Interview\) - YouTube](#)



Lt Commander Charles
Gillet



Lt Commander Gillet (far left with ball cap) on
an LCI with his team

The Wall That Heals

The Worcester County, Maryland Veterans Memorial Foundation recently hosted "*The Wall That Heals*." Gilchrist veteran volunteers Bill Pulket and Tim Price attended this special event.

On Veterans Day 1996, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) unveiled a replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., designed to travel to communities throughout the United States. Since its dedication, *The Wall That Heals* has been displayed at nearly 700 communities throughout the nation, spreading the Memorial's healing legacy to millions.

Bringing *The Wall That Heals* home to communities throughout our country allows the souls enshrined on the Memorial to exist once more among family and friends in the peace and comfort of familiar surroundings. The traveling exhibit provides thousands of veterans who have been unable to cope with the prospect of facing The Wall to find the strength and courage to do so within their own communities, thus allowing the healing process to begin.

The main components of *The Wall That Heals* are The Wall replica and the mobile Education Center. For more information, go to [The Wall That Heals - Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund \(vvmf.org\)](http://www.vvmf.org).

Tim Price (left) and Bill
Pulket honoring a veteran



A Life of Service

Cornelius J. "Neil" Behan began his life of service when he enlisted in the Army on December 29, 1942. Neil served in the 45th Division, 157th Infantry Regiment, Company H in Africa, Italy, France and Germany. His unit was involved in the liberation of the Dachau Concentration Camp in 1945. Neil received the Bronze Star, Purple Heart and Combat Infantryman Badge. He remembers being under fire and organizing and leading two litter teams to rescue a lieutenant and his aide who were badly wounded by exploding shells from the enemy. They were able to get them out of the artillery fire and to a safer place. Neil was honorably discharged at the rank of Sergeant on October 24, 1945.

Once back home, Neil took the civil service tests for both the NYPD and NYFD. He placed 17th out of 30,000 applicants on the NYPD test, so he joined the NYPD beginning a 31-year career.

Neil became an expert in the Pickpocket and Confidence Squad developing an eye for the tricks associated with vice, gambling, gypsies, and pick-pocketers. Neil eventually commanded this squad and talked about his experiences on the Jack Paar and Johnny Carson shows.

In 1965 Neil was promoted to Captain and supervised the 3rd & 8th Divisions of the Patrol Bureau, as well as assignments in the Office of the Chief Inspector, Public Morals Section. It was in this position that Neil achieved national recognition. Cornelius J. Behan was the first man Detective Frank Serpico told in 1967 about payoffs and corruption among plainclothesmen in the New York Police Department's 7th Division.

Over the years Neil moved up to Deputy Inspector, Inspector, Commanding Office of the Brooklyn South Patrol Bureau, and Chief of Personnel. In 1977 Neil was designated Chief of Field Services, the third highest ranking position in the NYPD.

In 1977 Neil was appointed the Chief of Police for the Baltimore County Police Department. During his tenure, Chief Behan reorganized and modernized the 2000-member force, focused on leadership and continuing education, and implemented a strong affirmative action policy. Chief Behan pioneered a number of award-winning programs and was often asked to speak at national and international law enforcement meetings and conferences. Chief Behan retired from the Baltimore County Police Department in 1993.

Neil met Pat at St. Agnes High School in College Point, NY and they were married on September 26, 1948. They raised four daughters and one son.

On April 25th Cornelius J. Behan was honored by Gilchrist staff and volunteers with a Salute to Service Tribute. The tribute included an opening prayer, the National Anthem, Pledge of Allegiance, and military and patriotic music. The team presented Neil with a certificate, handmade lap blanket, door plaque and a handmade card from a student. Neil was also presented with a We Honor Veterans pin. Cornelius J. Behan proudly returned the formal salute at the conclusion of the tribute.

Mr. Behan started serving his country in 1942 and continued beyond his retirement in 1993; often consulting, speaking and writing on leadership and management. Over 50 years of continuous service to the people of this country. Quite a life of service.



Sgt Behan



BCPD Chief Behan



Cornelius J. Behan Honored by Gilchrist Team

Sergeant Philip Nochumowitz

Philip Nochumowitz was born in 1918 in Baltimore, Maryland during the influenza pandemic. Philip recently celebrated his 102nd birthday, making him one of the few Americans to have lived through the two pandemics. Philip's father, David, was from Riga, Latvia and his mother, Anna, was from Russia/Poland. Philip had two brothers.

Phil enlisted in the Army in 1942 and served in the 7th Infantry Division, Quartermaster Corps in Germany, England and France from 1942-1946. Phil's brothers served at the same time in the Army and Navy. Phil Nochumowitz received a Bronze Star for meritorious service in connection with military operations in France, Belgium and Germany. Phil left the Army as a Sergeant.

Phil married Mildred in 1950 and together they operated a wholesale business for over 50 years. They had one child, a daughter, Diane, who married Nathan Torn. Phil beams with pride when talking about his three grandchildren. When asked about being married to Mildred for so many years, Phil says “it was a wonderful journey.” Phil worked well into his 84th year and was grateful for every day of work.

Phil served in 1948 as Master of the Masonic Lodge, staying active in the Amicable ~ St. John's Lodge #25 and recently received his 80 Year Gold Pin.

Phil is very strong in his faith, has been very active in his synagogue, Chizuk Amuno, and has been honored there several times.

On April 28, 2021, Phil was honored with a Salute to Service Tribute (SST). A team of military veteran volunteers from Gilchrist along with a music therapist conducted the SST. Phil received a We Honor Veterans pin, a certificate, and a handmade patriotic blanket. The tribute included an opening prayer, music, readings and concluded with a formal salute, closing prayer and the singing of God Bless America. Sergeant Philip Nochumowitz proudly returned the formal salute.



Philip Nochumowitz circa 1942



Phil proudly showing his Bronze Star



Philip Nochumowitz being honored by Gilchrist Volunteers

Gunner's Mate Robert White Celebrates 95th Birthday with Military Salute

Navy Gunner's Mate 3rd Class Robert White recently celebrated his 95th birthday in an outdoor ceremony at Charlestown Retirement Community in Catonsville, Maryland with

many of his friends and family in attendance. Highlighting the festivities was a warmly received Salute to Service Tribute conducted by Gilchrist Veteran volunteers Art Grau, Jim Sandoz, John Gonnella, Virgil Wright, Rick Uhlig and Ed Kaplan.

Bob initially joined the Merchant Marine in his native Philadelphia and then the United States Navy in 1944. He completed basic training at Bainbridge, MD followed by additional training at Camp Peary, VA.

Following basic training, Bob was assigned to USS Mataco (ATF-86), a Pacific fleet tug assigned to aid ships usually by towing on the high seas and in several combat areas including the assault on Okinawa, Japan. Bob spent his entire time in the Navy assigned to the USS Mataco and was honorably discharged on Independence Day, July 4, 1946.

In 1957 our honored veteran married Elizabeth and they had three children: Michael, Roberta, and Gary, all of whom attended the Charlestown Salute ceremonies on his actual birthday April 27th.

Bob's civilian career was with Texaco, working in accounting for many years in New Jersey and in Baltimore before retiring and returning to New Jersey. Eventually Bob and Elizabeth moved to Charlestown Senior Living Community where he has been very active in the "Treasure Sales" fundraising efforts.

Bob remains very proud of his service in the Navy, and still loves being by the sea.

On April 27, 2021 the Gilchrist Veterans Group conducted a Salute to Service Tribute to honor Robert for his military service. They presented the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization's "We Honor Veterans" award to United States Navy Gunner's Mate Robert White for his dedicated contributions to the service of our nation. Many thanks to Gilchrist Social Worker Counselor Dawn Wolf who made this Salute possible.

To learn more about Gilchrist, visit www.gilchristcares.org.



Gunner's Mate Robert White



Gilchrist Veteran Volunteers Honoring Robert White

Robert White
Returning a Salute



Managing PTSD While You Age

It's never too late to heal, no matter your age

Over the years it has been known as shell shock, combat fatigue, or battle fatigue. Today, we say posttraumatic stress disorder or PTSD. Although PTSD is often linked with combat, not all PTSD is combat-related. Any experience that threatens your life or someone else's can cause PTSD. You should know your treatment options and the challenges you may face as you get older in dealing with PTSD.

How aging affects PTSD

Some changes that come with normal aging may make you feel more vulnerable. This can make your PTSD symptoms more noticeable, causing them to come back after many years or even occur for the first time. Here are some examples of how aging can affect PTSD:

- Self-reflection: Looking back at your life, memories you had forgotten or purposefully bottled up may return.
- Retirement: With more time on your hands, unpleasant memories may surface more.
- Loss: The death of a spouse, partner, or friend can make you feel alone and unsafe, leaving you vulnerable to PTSD.
- Physical ability: You may lose strength, making you feel like you can't protect yourself.
- Change in the environment: Spending time in unfamiliar places, like moving to a new home or staying at a hotel, can upend your daily routine and make you feel less safe.
- More screen time: You may be watching more TV. The news and war scenes may cause you to relive memories.
- Medical problems: Hospital stays, chronic illness, and end-of-life issues can make you feel weaker and more fearful. PTSD symptoms may increase.

Help at any age

Remember: it's never too late to heal. Treatment is for people of all ages. If you have symptoms of PTSD, don't wait to ask for help. Many treatments are proven to work, and the VA offers almost 200 programs. For more information, go to:

[PTSD Treatment | Veterans Affairs \(va.gov\)](https://www.va.gov/PTSDTreatment)

Connect with your care

My HealtheVet helps Veterans with PTSD manage their health care and access their records. Veterans can also communicate with therapists, doctors, and other members of the health care team. If you have PTSD symptoms, it's time to ask for help. With a premium account, you can follow up with your doctor about your medications or treatment using secure messaging. For more information, go to:

[Home - My HealtheVet \(va.gov\)](#)

Uniform Smiles

Question: Why does the military only allow dress shirts at its ceremonies?

Answer: Because civilian casual tees are unacceptable.

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.

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.

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.

