

Lt Gene R. Gislason

Born: 9/21/1916
Sturgeon Bay

Died: April, 1989

Period of Service: WW II
USCG

Sources: B10 F2, B10F2a
monument, B10 F 2a. Am
Legion scrapbook box 17

Entered service 3/30/1942 from the Island.

Released to inactive duty 1/21/1946 at 'military convenience', and then recalled to active duty 8/21/1947, and finally discharged on Feb 12, 1948.

Joined the American Legion Post 402 on October 1, 19945.

Lt Gislason commanded a large Coast Guard LCI. According to an article that appeared in both the *ChicagoTribune* and the *Los AngelesTimes* he was called upon to take some badly wounded men off a smaller boat, and he "handled the transfer in a choppy sea with great skill." The reporter made his way to the bridge to ask Gene if he were a professional sailor and was told merely, "I'm with the Coast Guard." The reporter added that he made the remark sound "as if that explained everything."

In another incident on an invasion of a French beach, Germans had criss-crossed utility poles to which mines were tied. After unloading soldiers, one of the poles with its mine drifted perilously close but Gene saw it and ordered swift work at the winch. Immediately after, a shell hit the ship, killed three men and put the steering out of commission. With one man operating the manual steering apparatus below deck and a man shouting Gene's orders through a megaphone, the LCI made port. Gene could see the mine better than the skipper, and so countermanded his orders to leave stations and stand clear. Gene thought they had a chance to steer clear of the mine.

Elmer Sorenson of the Island was aboard as chief machinist's mate.

Gene Gislason was given a citation for "outstanding heroism and devotion to duty as commanding officer of USS LCI 94 while landing assault troops on Normandy on June 6, 1944." He directed his ship through numerous obstacles, even though the ship was severely damaged.

He engaged in the invasion of Sicily, the invasion of Salerno, Italy, and finally the invasion of Normandy at Omaha Beach in Seine Bay.

His ships were *USCG Argo* 4/8/1942 – 2/3/1945 and *USS LCI 94* 12/23/1944 -12/27/1944. He was later assigned to office of marine inspection till time of discharge.

Another article of September 1944 told of a time when Gene, knowing the boat that Lloyd Orman and Carl Jessen were on, came alongside theirs. He took them on his boat, they set out to have dinner together in a French town, and on their way they bumped into Roy Cornell who was with the Seabees over there. Four Island boys had a good evening in the middle of France.

Gene was proud to take his same ship back to the States from England that he had brought over, 3800 miles in 21 days. He was expecting to be assigned to the Pacific theater.

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His medals include Silver Star, Croix de Guerre, ETO ribbon with four bronze stars, American Theater ribbon and Victory.

He married Elayne Cole on June 9, 1945. See her bio page. They had a son Jeffrey Charles born 10/16/1947.

