



William P Gosch Jr.

December 8, 1923 - March 29, 2026

WWII Marine Corp Combat War Hero and Local Icon William “Bill” Gosch from North Tonawanda, NY has Passed Away at the Age of 102. Gosch fought in combat during some of the greatest battles of the war in the Pacific Theatre. The City of North Tonawanda, NY is in mourning as it has lost one of its most beloved and iconic figures in Lumber City history with the passing of William “Bill” Gosch on Sunday, March 29, 2026. Mr. Gosch passed away peacefully at his home in North Tonawanda surrounded by his family. He was part of “The Greatest Generation” and for good reason. Those Americans who lived in the 1940’s and were victorious in WWII in both the Atlantic and Pacific Theatres, along with the Allied Forces, are the generation that made America the greatest country in the world. Bill was one of those great American WWII War Heroes of that generation. He served his country in 1942 by joining the Marine Corp as an 18-year old fresh out of North Tonawanda High School. Throughout his life, Bill was known not only for his military service, but for his deep connection to his hometown. He valued community, conversation, and the simple joys of everyday life. He became a familiar and welcomed presence at the North Tonawanda City Market, where he enjoyed visiting as a shopper, engaging with vendors, and sharing stories with those who had the privilege of meeting him. In recognition of his service and legacy, Mr. Gosch is proudly honored on the Veterans Wall at the North Tonawanda City Market, a lasting tribute to his dedication to our nation and his place within the local community. Mayor Austin Tylec, who had a personal friendship with Mr.

Gosch, shared the following statement: “William Gosch represented the very best of our country and our community. As a World War II veteran, he served with bravery and honor, and in the years that followed, he remained a kind, humble, and familiar presence here in North Tonawanda. I was proud to know him and call him a friend. His legacy will live on through the lives he touched and the example he set for all of us. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family during this difficult time.”

Mr. Gosch’s life spanned more than a century of American history from the trials of the Great

Depression, to serving in World War II, and witnessing generations of growth and change in his

hometown. His story reflects the strength and resilience of a generation that shaped our nation and our

communities. As a Marine, PFC Gosch participated in four combat missions.

From Guadalcanal, to Bougainville where he became a member of the elite special forces team called Carlson’s Raiders- 2 nd Raider Battalion, to Guam which was a U.S. possession since 1898 until Japanese captured it in

December, 1941, just hours before the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. It was then on to Okinawa where the contact with the enemy was made and heavy combat fighting took place.

The Okinawa invasion was carried out by 60,000 U.S. soldiers and Marines.

The battle lasted nearly three months until June 23, 1945 and was a pivotal operation in the successful outcome for the U.S. in the war in the Pacific.

More than 12,000 U.S. soldiers, sailors and Marines died during the fighting.

On Bill’s 100 th Birthday Celebration he was presented with eight medals by Sergeant Major Brett Sheuer (Retired) of the U.S. Marine Corp. Ironically, Bill

had never received his medals that he earned from WWII, and so this was something that is very special to Bill and his entire family. These medals

include; Navy –Marine Presidential (Distinguished) Unit Commendation

Ribbon ; Marine Corp Good Conduct Medal; Navy-Marine Combat Action

Medal; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic –Pacific Campaign Medal w/4

Bronze Campaign Stars; WWII Victory Medal; WWII Honorable Discharge Button and Marine Corps Rifle Marksman Badge. With the war ending, PFC Gosch was sent back home to North Tonawanda and was soon offered a scholarship to play football for Niagara University. He graduated in June, 1950 from Niagara and that same month married his bride Lois Kothan. They had four children, Phyllis, Susan, Christine and Matthew. He worked several jobs after getting married including Johns-Manville, Richardson Boat Company, North Tonawanda Housing Project and even at age 97, serving as temporary Alderman for the North Tonawanda City Council in 2020. After retiring in 1979, he moved to Oahu, Hawaii on a seasonal basis with his bride and began dealing in the costume jewelry business. Every May, they would return home which they did for 26-years. Sadly, Lois passed away at the age of 95 in 2022. Bill was a well-liked and popular figure in North Tonawanda who earned the nickname the “Original Mr. Fix-It” for his ability to fix just about anything. He was an anchor in the community, participating as the Grand Marshall in several local parades and was a strong supporter of anything North Tonawanda.

He became a well - known national figure and has been interviewed several times. He has also been interviewed by Honor Flight Heroes TV dedicated to “Hidden Heroes of WWII”. Kate Snow of NBC nightly news interviewed him as well as representatives from Japanese National Public TV.

Following his trip to Washington D.C., on the Buffalo Niagara Honor flight in 2022 Bill said “My world has changed to say the least for the better”. His limitless stories of all things growing up in North Tonawanda were heard every Summer on his front porch on Goundry Street where neighbors and passersby casually gathered to hear a slice of history from a true American War Hero.

Statement from the Gosch family;

“Our family is deeply grateful for the incredible outpouring of love and support shown to our father over the

years. The people of North Tonawanda always embraced him—not just as a war hero, but as a neighbor, a friend, and a familiar face in the community. Whether it was a kind word at the City Market, a wave from the porch, or someone stopping to thank him for his service, he truly felt that appreciation. That love meant everything to him, and it means everything to us. We are proud to share him with this community and thankful for the way you all shared your appreciation and love for our father.”

A viewing will take place on Thursday, April 2, from 4:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. at Wattengel

Funeral Home, 533 Meadow Drive, North Tonawanda, NY. Funeral Services will be held Saturday, April 4, at 10:00 am at Wattengel Funeral Home, 533 Meadow Drive, North Tonawanda, New York 14120.

Burial immediately after at Wheatfield Cemetery. Mapleton Road, Sanborn, New York with Military Honors.

Celebration of Life on Saturday, April 4 from 1:00pm - 5pm at Gratwick Hose Fire

Company, 110 Ward Road, North Tonawanda

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 2. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Wattengel Funeral Home (Meadow Drive)
533 Meadow Drive
North Tonawanda, NY 14120
(716) 693-0440
wattengelfh@gmail.com
<https://www.wattengel.com>

Funeral Service

APR 4. 10:00 AM (ET)

Wattengel Funeral Home (Meadow Drive)
533 Meadow Drive
North Tonawanda, NY 14120
(716) 693-0440
wattengelfh@gmail.com
<https://www.wattengel.com>

Celebration of Life

APR 4. 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

Gratwick Hose Lounge
110 Ward Road
North Tonawanda, NY 14120

Tribute Wall

AT

“ Alexandra, Jackie & Kevin Taylor purchased the Lavender Reflections Spray for the family of William P Gosch Jr..



Alexandra, Jackie & Kevin Taylor - April 03 at 11:56 AM

AT

“ Alexandra, Jackie & Kevin Taylor planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of William P Gosch Jr..

Alexandra, Jackie & Kevin Taylor - April 03 at 11:56 AM



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of William P Gosch Jr..



April 02 at 12:55 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of William P Gosch Jr..

April 02 at 12:55 PM

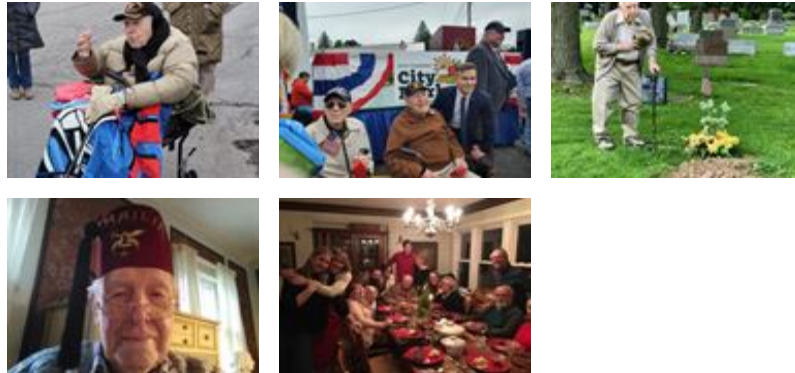
MH

“ Wishing you peace and comfort as you honor the incredible life of your father.

Mike Hurtubise - April 02 at 09:38 AM



“ 182 files added to the album LifeTributes



Wattengel Funeral Home - April 01 at 04:26 PM

WF

“ With love ~ Steven Brousseau and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of William P Gosch Jr..

With love ~ Steven Brousseau and family - April 01 at 12:59 PM

WF

“ With love ~ Steven Brousseau and family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of William P Gosch Jr..



With love ~ Steven Brousseau and family - April 01 at 12:59 PM

WI

“ William I. purchased the Sacred Duty Spray for the family of William P Gosch Jr..



William I. - March 31 at 05:38 PM

KC

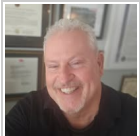
“ I was honored to have Uncle Bill as my Godfather, So many wonderful family memories that he was a part of. There is a huge hole in our family now. He was the last of his generation in our family. Rest in Peace Uncle Bill

Kathleen Gosch Camann - March 31 at 03:15 PM

AF

“ A great honor to have known Bill Gosch. Through his son Matt. RIP

Angelo Forgione - March 31 at 02:47 PM



“ So very glad that I was introduced to Bill by Bill Irr, his great friend. What a man! We can never thank his generation enough for securing our freedoms and liberties for our generations going forward. God bless you and thank you Bill Gosch - you were right when you said after your war experinces in the Pacific..."The world just got a little bit bigger!" RIP my hero.

Terry McGuire - March 31 at 02:37 PM



“ *my father Harvey Hough always had deep respect for him and so did we - my husband Frank and I - Martha Hough Barry - a wonderful gentleman!*

Martha Barry - March 31 at 02:19 PM

MF

“ *hello it was my honor and priviledge to have met and shared stories with bill at the wurlitizer car cruise on niagara falls blvd,on our 2nd meeting i presented bill with my squadron challenge coin and he was thrilled to have received it .. a slow hand salute and a shout out of his name to remember him and his sacrifice to his and our countryall my best to his family ,respectfully msgt michael s francoforte asaf (ret)*



mike franco - March 31 at 11:24 AM

GH

“ *Glenn & Paula Hall planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of William P Gosch Jr..*

Glenn & Paula Hall - March 31 at 04:10 AM

GH

“ *Glenn & Paula Hall purchased the Simply Elegan t Spathiphyllum for the family of William P Gosch Jr..*



Glenn & Paula Hall - March 31 at 04:10 AM