



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George D. Maziarz

WWII veteran Margaret Gill honored in North Tonawanda

GEORGE D. MAZIARZ August 19, 2011

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The late Margaret Gill, a US Army nurse who grew up in North Tonawanda, has been inducted into the New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame, according to Senator George Maziarz. A plaque commemorating Gill's service was unveiled today in North Tonawanda City Hall.

"Margaret Gill was a true American hero during World War II," said Senator Maziarz. "A look at her life reveals a person who took great risks to serve our country and our soldiers. Amidst the horrors of war, she selflessly treated the sick, wounded, and dying. Her wartime service, and her entire medical career, deserve to be remembered. We are very grateful to her. She has made North Tonawanda very proud."

After growing up in North Tonawanda and earning a nursing degree in Buffalo, Margaret Gill enlisted in the US Army in May 1941. In the immediate aftermath of the Allied invasion on D-Day, Margaret and her fellow nurses established a field hospital in Normandy for General Patton's Third Army and operated there for several months. On Christmas morning, the hospital was moved to Bastogne where it was under constant enemy fire. The camp had only three walls and no roof, but continued to treat wounded soldiers in the cold and in the snow. Gill later was assigned to the 60th Division and treated victims of the infamous Dachau concentration camp upon its liberation.

Gill saw two more actions before she was sent to Panama to work in a field hospital. Promoted to First Lieutenant, she was awarded the Bronze Star for her heroic work in Bastogne and five battle stars for being part of the storming of Normandy and the liberation of Dachau. After the war, Gill continued to work as a nurse for several decades in Long Island where she raised a family.

Margaret Gill was the first woman in New York State to be awarded the Bronze Star medal for bravery under enemy fire, and she is honored on the Women In Military Service For America Memorial in Washington, DC. She died in 1978.

A large, framed, commemorative plaque in Gill's honor was unveiled today and will remain on public display in North Tonawanda City Hall for one month. Senator Maziarz was joined at the event by local government officials and Margaret Gill's daughter, Mary Jeffords of Sanborn.

The New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame was created in 2005.

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