

Special veteran guests at North Tonawanda History Museum



On Tuesday, May 24, the North Tonawanda History Museum welcomed as special guests two outstanding World War II veterans for a public discussion and Q&A: Richard Keil of the Army Air Corps (later to split off as the U.S. Air Force) and Bill Gosch of the U.S. Marine Corps. Keil served in the European theater over the western part of the continent on missions ranging

from bombing runs to supplies and tech. Gosch served in the Pacific, "island-hopping" in often close combat, such as Okinawa. Their talks will later be available on YouTube.

In the 48-star flag picture, Gosch, who is 99 years of age, is on the left and Keil, aged 100, is on the right. They are among the last World War II veterans in Western New York. Both were

only around 20 years old at the time of service.

Members of the public, who filled the room, was both enthralled and humbled by their varied experiences in the field and subsequent lessons about the horrors of war.

The North Tonawanda History Museum is located at 712 Oliver St.

(Submitted by Justin Higner)

'Gather in the Garden,' an evening of prayer and reflection in North Tonawanda

North Tonawanda residents Marybeth Kupiec and Paula Benedyczak, in conjunction with the Office of Mayor Austin Tylec, invite the public to gather at the Children's Remembrance Garden (216 Payne Ave.) June 5 for an evening of prayer, music and reflection in remembrance of the lives lost from recent tragedies throughout the nation.

Kupiec, who assisted in the creation of the Children's Re-

membrance Garden, said, "During these challenging and stressful days, we're invited to pause in prayer and reflection for ourselves, our community, our city, our country and our world."

Organizers said, "This will be an opportunity to come together as a community now more than ever, to help bring healing and renewal."

This event is open to the public and will take place from 7-8 p.m.

Sunday. Participants are welcome to bring a blanket or chair, and are asked to bring toiletries or nonperishable goods for donations to the Buffalo community.

Pastor Blaine Jorg will be officiating, with vocal and instrumental performers adding to the event.

In case of inclement weather, this event will be moved to St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, 875 Eggert Drive.

'The King's Birthday' special event at Fort Niagara

A British soldier, serving at Fort Niagara during the 18th century, got one holiday a year: the King's Birthday. To celebrate, the fort's garrison was turned out in new uniforms and powdered hair. At noon, the artillery fired a "Royal Salute," followed by three volleys of musketry.

On June 4, Old Fort Niagara will recreate this celebration with a series of living history programs about the British Army during the 1770s. At that time, the British monarch was King George III, who was born on June 4, 1738, in London.

Visitors to the event will witness artillery and musket salutes and a new program titled "Busting Battlefield Myths."

A press release stated, "American schoolchildren are often taught that the British Army dur-

ing the American Revolution was slow, hidebound and vulnerable, dressing in bright red coats and standing in the open. In reality, the British army was tactically innovative, winning most of the battles in which it was engaged. Visitors will learn how the British modified their tactics to deal with the realities of North American warfare."

What about those red coats? Another new program features dressing the soldier from shirt and breeches to full uniform and equipment. Visitors will learn about various components of the soldier's uniform and why they were designed the way they were.

At 2 p.m., visitors can participate in a toast to King George drawn directly from 18th century records. The toast will be

followed by a rendition of "God Save the King."

Fort Niagara was also a strategic meeting place between British officials and Native American leaders. Programs throughout the day will demonstrate the interaction between soldiers and Native people who came to the fort to trade, negotiate and receive critical supplies.

OFN added, "King George III is often viewed as a villain who presided over the British war effort during the American Revolution. To soldiers at Fort Niagara, however, the King's Birthday was something to look forward to."

Visit www.oldfortniagara.org or call 716-745-7611 for more information and a full schedule of activities.

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