



## Raymond M. Della Gala

December 4, 1923 - February 11, 2013

Mr. Raymond M. Della Gala, age 89, passed away unexpectedly on Monday, February 11, 2013 at the Faxon-St. Luke's Healthcare Center with his loving family by his side.

Raymond was born in Utica on December 4, 1923, the son of the late Dionisio and Filomena (Geruntino) Della Gala. He was a graduate of T.R. Proctor High School.

Ray was a highly decorated World War II Navy war hero, earning several medals for dedicated service and valor, including the Distinguished Flying Cross and two Air Medals, among many others. He was a turret gunner with the VP/VPB-26 squadron. His was the first squad to secure Tokyo Bay for the USS Missouri. The event is memorialized on a plaque in the U.S. Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C. Of special note, Ray took one of the very first photos of the original U.S. flag being hoisted on Mount Suribachi at the battle of Iwo Jima.

On September 13, 1947 he married his childhood sweetheart, the former Congetta "Connie" Aceto, with whom he shared 65 years of true love in a long and happy marriage; they held each other in high admiration in their hearts, and were good and kind to one another.

In 1976, Ray founded the annual VPB-26 Squadron Reunion together with fellow squadron member Joseph Zannelli. The Reunion exists to this day and Ray and his wife are the only couple to have attended every reunion since its inception. In recognition of his tireless efforts to organize and keep this group

together, Ray was elected its permanent president.

As a young man, Ray worked as his father's helper in the family pastry shop, Café Nationale. In later life, Ray delighted in passing along to his children and grandchildren the techniques and many delicious "secret" recipes he learned at his father's side.

Raymond's main occupation in life was with the US Postal Service where he was a Letter Carrier; his service spanned 27 years until his retirement in 1985. His affiliations included being a member of the Postal Union, the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Branch #375, and the National American Legion. He was a parishioner of St. Anthony & St. Agnes Church. Ray had a great love of all kinds of music, especially rock and roll, and took special pride in following the many different bands in which his son Michael was a member. The consummate family man, Ray devoted his life to his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and their friends.

Raymond is survived by his beloved wife, Connie; his sons and daughters-in-law, Raymond D. and Michele A. (O'Connor) Della Gala of Frankfort, and Michael D. and LaDonna Della Gala of CA; his daughter and son-in-law, Michele A. and Anthony Ricci of Utica; his grandchildren, Rhiannon, Chelsea and husband Chad Stockbridge; Daniele, Gina, Maria, and Michael; Alison Ricci and fiancé Walter Wadas, and Meredith Ricci; and his great-grandchildren, Michael Raymond and Mia (Pia), and Jadon. He also leaves his brother and sister-in-law, Joseph and "Millie" Della Gala of Utica; many cherished nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, cousins, and in-laws, Gloria Della Gala, Mary Della Gala, Dan and Faith Aceto, Jane Saporito, Delores "Babe" Luizzi, and Albert Grossi. He was also blessed in his life with many wonderful friendships. He was predeceased by his siblings and their spouses, Louise and Anthony Falange, Henry "Chick" Della Gala, Anthony P. "Gellie" Della Gala, and Isabel A. Della Gala; and his in-laws, Frank and Angela Aceto, Marge Grossi, Eleanor and Patsy "Chuck" Zammiello, Salvatore Saporito and Lawrence Luizzi .

A special thank-you is extended to Raymond's neighbor and friend, Tom

Carcone, the Utica EMT's, and the Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare Center nurses and staff, especially Patty L., for their compassion and dedication. Visitation will be held Friday from 4:00-7:00 at the Eannace Funeral Home, Inc., 932 South St., corner of Hammond Ave. Expressions of sympathy in the form of donations may be made to the Disabled American Veterans in lieu of floral offerings; envelopes will be available at the funeral home. Raymond's funeral service and Celebration of Life will commence on Saturday morning at 10:00 from the funeral home and at 11:00 at St. Anthony & St. Agnes Church where his Mass of Christian Burial, committal prayers, and Naval Honors will be conferred. Rev. Mark Kaminski, Pastor will be officiating the services. Interment will take place in Calvary Cemetery at the convenience of the family.

# Cemetery Details

## Calvary Cemetery

2407 Oneida Street  
Utica, NY 13501  
(315) 735-2727

# Previous Events

## Visitation

FEB **15**. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Eannace Funeral Home, Inc.  
932 South Street  
corner of Hammond Ave.  
Utica, NY 13501  
(315) 724-6714  
eannacefh@roadrunner.com  
<https://www.eannacefuneralhome.com>

## Service

FEB **16**. 10:00 AM (ET)

Eannace Funeral Home, Inc.  
932 South Street  
corner of Hammond Ave.  
Utica, NY 13501  
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# Tribute Wall

DG

“ I am truly sorry for your loss; I just found out! I am the Grand Daughter of Louis and Florence Gigliotti, Sr. and the daughter of their oldest son Louis who have all passed on. I am sure that you all know my Uncle Ronald Gigliotti since Michael went to school with him. I wanted to express how sorry I am that Raymond has passed on and that my family as well as myself know how hard these times are for all of you. We want to send all of you our love. Sincerely saddened,  
Doreen Ann Gigliotti-Balls



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**Doreen Ann Gigliotti-Balls** - February 19, 2013 at 12:04 AM

DP

“ Diana And Thomas Pierce lit a candle in memory of Raymond M. Della Gala



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**Diana and Thomas Pierce** - February 15, 2013 at 03:19 PM



“ Red, White & Blue Large Sympathy Vase Arrangement was purchased for the family of Raymond M. Della Gala.



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February 14, 2013 at 06:06 PM

DL

“ Aunt Connie and Family,  
So sorry to hear about Uncle Ray. He was always a breath of fresh air and enjoyable to be around. I remember going in the garden, swimming in the pool, and of course the best cookies in the world that he shared, along with his great sense of humor. I will always remember him fondly. Best wishes to you and the family. Miss you all.  
Love, David Luizzi

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David Luizzi - February 14, 2013 at 05:45 PM

ML

“ 1 file added to the album New Album Name



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Marjorie Leuthauser - February 14, 2013 at 01:25 PM

PM

“ To my crazy buddy Ray and family, I'm sorry to hear of the passing of your dad. He lived a long and interesting life. He was one of "the Great Generation" who gave willingly to his country. He, like my father and so many others from that era set the example of hard work and dedication for us to follow. I know you will miss him and I'm sorry I can't be there, but know you are in my prayers.  
"Piggy" Pat and Brenda McCann

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pat mccann - February 14, 2013 at 07:54 AM

Steve  
Jamrosz

“ Aunt Connie and family, We were so sorry to hear about Uncle Ray. He was a great man and always brought a smile to our face whenever we saw him. He will be missed.

Love,

Steve & Michele

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Steve Jamrosz - February 13, 2013 at 10:51 PM

MK

“ Aunt Connie and family, I have never met a nicer man who always made me feel like I was an Olympian when I ran the Boilermaker. Literally, ever year for 13 years, Uncle Ray would say, "I found your name in the paper," which at first surprised me, because although I wasn't technically family, he sure made me feel like I was. I'll surely miss him saying that every July, and I'm sad that he will not physically be at my and Joe's wedding in October. He will be there in spirit. Uncle Ray seemed to have lived life to the fullest - always in good spirits - and that will be the memory that inspires all of us to stive to do the same.

Love,

Monique Kelley

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Monique Kelley - February 13, 2013 at 09:18 PM

CT

“ Dear Della Gala family,  
Keeping you in my thoughts and prayers. I'm so sorry for your loss.

Chelesea



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Chelesea Talerico - February 13, 2013 at 08:11 PM

RC

“ Connie,

*Bill and I can't express how sorry we were to hear about Raymond's passing. He was a dear man and always made us feel as if we were a part of the family although we only saw you once or twice a year. And every year he would greet me "with a name like Raymond, you can't be all bad". I know the first place I will look this year is at that seat at the kitchen table where every year on "rehearsal" night we would sit and talk about the "old days" We will miss him very much.*

*Love,*

*Ray & Bill  
(The Boys)*

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**Raymond Coluzzi** - February 13, 2013 at 05:47 PM

LH

“ Aunt Connie and family Lee and I will miss Uncle Ray deeply. Such a caring, loving, generous kind man. I'll always cherish our talks about our garden, and the first thing he would ask me if I have any tomatoes? It was a joy to bring him stuff from my garden. I have fond memories of Uncle Ray's Lemon ice. Uncle Ray always was my favorite Uncle so concerned and interested in everything you had to say. He is truly one of a kind who I will miss greatly. I will see you again one day and we will have a bowl of lemon ice together. We Love You!!!!

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**laurie Hayes** - February 13, 2013 at 05:39 PM

AP

“ Aunt Connie and family,  
Uncle Ray will be missed so much. He had such a contagious smile that will now live forever in our memories. Joey is so right, Uncle Ray was always so interested in where we were traveling to next or if we were going to be running the Boilermaker. Even though, we only saw him a couple times a year, those times were cherished. We will miss him. We love you.  
Love - Alicia & Jonathan Perkins

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**Alicia Perkins** - February 13, 2013 at 01:06 PM

 Joe Gigliotti

“ Aunt Connie and family, I am so sad about Uncle Ray. All my memories of him are how he was always smiling and talkative. He was always interested in what I was up to. Definitely the cutest little man ever. And in recent years you and Uncle Ray would always be excited about Monique and I running the Boilermaker. What a great guy. I will miss him a lot.

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**Joe Gigliotti** - February 13, 2013 at 12:44 PM

LF

“ Aunt Connie , i am so sorry, my dad spoke many times over the years about how much he loved and respected Uncle Ray. He always made me laugh and i will miss him. Love you. Louise Falange

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**louise Falange** - February 13, 2013 at 09:48 AM

JG

“ Dear Connie and Family,  
Our thoughts and prayers are with you during this time of sorrow  
and transition. Hugs and kisses to all.

Cousins John and Marilo Grassi

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**John Grassi** - February 13, 2013 at 08:27 AM

JL

“ Mr. "D" was quite a guy. I'll always remember the times we sat in the Della Gala kitchen, with Mrs. D nearby, talking ... about everything! My fondest memory is the time I met Mr. and Mrs. D and, if I recall correctly, Mich at Penn Station in New York. I was living in the City at the time, and Michael shipped me one of his bass guitars to sell. Indeed, I got a good buck for it at "We Buy Guitars" on 46th Street. Long story short, I met the Della Galas at Penn Station to give them the cash from the sale, since they were enroute to California to visit Michael. When I walked into the terminal, Mr. D had this huge smile welcoming me and said something along the lines of, "Now, when you give me the money be careful...someone might think I'm selling you drugs". We all had a good laugh. I feel very fortunate to have spent some time with Mr. and Mrs. D and Michael at their home in Utica just a couple weeks ago. That visit was serendipitous because, as it turned out, it was my last chance to see him. Rest in peace, Mr. D. And to the family: My thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time.

With Love & Sincerest Condolences,  
John LaBella

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**John LaBella** - February 12, 2013 at 08:36 PM

LM

*Always welcoming and a big smile to go with it whenever I stopped by. I will try to smile as well, Raymond, but it will be difficult....we will all miss you. I am so proud to always be considered part of your extended family by you & Connie. RIP.....Love, Joy & Peace, "CRE"*

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**Lucretia M.Zongrone** - February 13, 2013 at 07:21 AM

JD

*Dear Connie and family  
Sid and I are so sorry to hear of Ray passing. We feel bad not attending the last Navy Reunion and being able to visit with you and Ray. Please know you are in our prayers . We will always remember the GREAT Reunions with you and Ray. We have lots of pictures to share.*

*With lots of love and our sympathies.*

*Janice and Sid Damstra*

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**Janice Damstra** - February 17, 2013 at 12:35 PM