



Ralph Lee Mahlke

April 26, 1923 - November 15, 2019

Mahlke, Ralph Lee

age 96, was welcomed into heaven on November 15, 2019. Ralph was born on April 26, 1923 to John Michael Mahlke and Matilda Ann (Swick) Mahlke near Lafayette, Indiana. He married his lifetime love, Betty (Osborn) Mahlke, on December 1, 1950.

Ralph grew up on a farm in a large family with an immigrant German father. With 6 brothers and 4 sisters, Ralph needed to help out with finances from a very young age by doing many different kinds of manual labor jobs. This created a great work ethic that lasted his entire life. He worked for CCC (Civil Conservation Corp) during the Great Depression before serving in the Army, Infantry Division, during World War II. After the war he came back to Indiana and joined the Indianapolis Fire Department at Station 14. On his days off from the fire department, he and his brother Ed worked together at their construction business building room additions and various remodeling jobs. He loved to stay busy fixing things, always looking for ways to make something better. You would often find him holding a hammer, screwdriver or a can of WD40.

In 1975, Ralph and Betty decided to become snowbirds. They tried Florida for two winters and then checked out Tucson, Arizona. They fell in love with Tucson and decided to purchase a place there in 1979, splitting their time between Indiana and Tucson. In 1987 they sold their home in Indiana to live in Tucson full time. In the summer months they visited family and friends in Indiana and Minnesota. They moved to Minnesota in 2012 to be closer to family.

Ralph adored ballroom dancing and square dancing with Betty. He loved spending time outdoors hiking, bicycling, canoeing, and camping. He kept busy doing woodwork, stain glass, leather crafting, and making jewelry; and continued to build things to the very end.

Ralph was preceded in death by his parents John and Tilly Mahlke; wife Betty Joan Mahlke; brothers Raymond, Edward, Robert, Leonard, Albert, and Ronnie; and sisters Laura, Opal, Arlene and unnamed infant baby girl. He is survived by his son Dave (Susie) Mahlke, daughter Linda (Dale) Putrah, grandchildren Travis (Erin) Putrah, Kristin (Wayne) Carlson, Danielle Mahlke; great-grandchildren Lillian Putrah, Micah Putrah and Blake Carlson; and many nieces and nephews.

A private memorial service will be held next summer at Fort Snelling in Minneapolis, Minnesota with Military Honors

Tribute Wall

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“ *Dear Family and Friends, It was our privilege to provide care for Ralph. We share in your grief and send our love.*

Your Friends at Little Hospice

Little Hospice - November 27, 2019 at 06:14 PM

CW

“ *A funny incident with Ralph: Jim took Ralph for a ride up in the new addition of houses right here by Highview Hills where we and Ralph and Betty lived. The streets/roads were not yet completed and when the guys were done looking over the development, Jim took off down this "path" that really did lead out to Cedar but Jim forgot that it had rained a couple of days before so he got stuck in really deep mud and couldn't move the car at all. Jim called our son and he came with a scoop shovel and shoveled a path in the mud for the tires and Jim then could get the car out to the road. Well, guess what? I don't think Ralph ever went on a car ride with Jim again.! :-)*
We enjoyed playing board games with Ralph and Betty when we all first moved into Highview Hills. We are grateful for that friendship.

Caroline Wilde - November 18, 2019 at 03:14 PM